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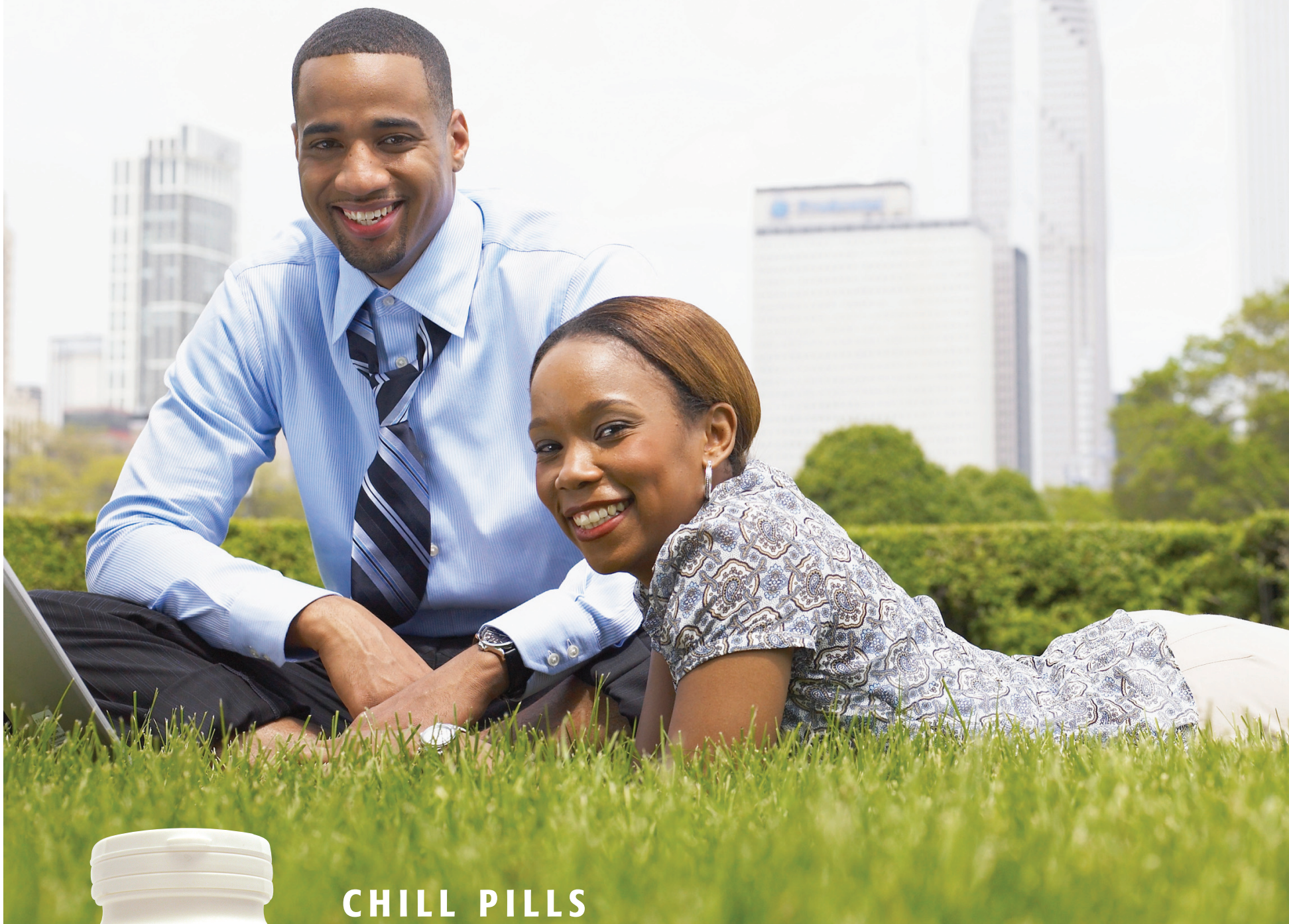
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The writing on the wall

*The greatest tyrannies are always perpetrated
 in the name of the noblest causes.*

— Thomas Paine, publisher of *Common Sense*, 1776

We are getting fleeced by the banks that caused monetary system crisis. The companies crying wolf are the very wolves who steal money from our government treasury. The money they whine about losing belongs to that odd unproductive shadow economy that produces nothing but financial instruments, mortgaged backed assets, derivatives, etc. Its called the casino economy, and it is harming our real economy where things actually get made to benefit humanity.

If those financial institutions really wanted to help the borrower they could cut their profits. If a credit card company bewails the lack of consumer confidence, they could lower their rates to by half. Want to help homeowners, really? Then drop mortgage rates.

Americians got ripped off in the October Surprise bank bail out allegedly meant to help people keep their houses. Seven hundred billion dollars of taxpayers money given to the same financial cartels who handled the sub prime fiasco. Its the biggest heist in history. That money could have been divided up democratically. Imagine giving each homeowner \$36,000 to stimulate the economy.

Just before the Canadian federal election, PM Harper claimed our economy was strong, different than America's, but a day later his finance minister dumps billions into the top five Canadian banks. Both denied it was a bail-out, but an investment to make our banks more "competitive".

You might get annoyed at criticisms of what the lords of money say through the media they own. You may believe they are protecting us from a financial collapse. But lets put what banks have done for us in perspective. If "the system" did such a great job, how come my parents could afford a brand new house and large yard with only one person working, whereas today, two parents must work just to pay for a small condo that might leak? Another reference point: minimum wage has not kept up with inflation. Lets rethink the propaganda that keeps us confused, abused, and victimized by our own money. Join your local credit union and stop supporting the big bank cartel.

Banking institutions are more dangerous to our liberties than standing armies. If the American people ever allow private banks to control the issue of their currency, first by inflation, then by deflation, the banks and corporations that will grow up around the banks will deprive the people of all property until their children wake-up homeless on the continent their fathers conquered. — Thomas Jefferson, 1802

Health Food Matters

by Joseph Roberts



photo: Luc Santerre Castonguay

Food was always very important, the author said on the radio as she dedicated her new cookbook to her mother “who instilled in her a love of food”.

Food is important, in many ways and for many reasons. In many different delicious cultures there are very distinct eating habits, but we all have something in common: we all eat.

Books abound with food for thought: *The Food Revolution*, *Power of Superfoods*, *Fields of Plenty*, *Vegan Delights*, *Real Foods for a Change*, *No More Bull*, *Eating My Words*, *Chef's Table*, *New Ethics of Eating*, *Feed Your Genes Right*, *The Joy of Cooking*, and even *The End of Food*.

Yes, we all eat – at least those of us who are fortunate to live in places where food exists. Many just scrape by, and the even less fortunate die of starvation.

Soil, water, and sun are so intertwined with food on this good earth. I hold an almond in my hand: how did it get here where did it come from, who help it grow? So many questions. Each nut is a seed capable of growing into a huge beautiful tree which in turn brings forth the next generation of almond flowers

which produce pollen for the bees. The mystery of life to continues.

Humans are not the only animals who cherish nuts and seeds. The branches of the birch tree outside my window are home to many seed-eating birds and squirrels. We are each and all part of a magical natural cycle. As the grey and black squirrels scurry about on autumn's gold-leafed branches, people scurry about in traffic and in their homes. While the wilder creatures hunt and gather directly from the source of their sustenance, we too search out our foods – but usually in more indirect and complex manners.

What we choose to eat is based on our beliefs, our customs.

Where our foods come from, what soil or water they use, how they are grown and produced makes the difference between life giving or disease making. As we learn and evolve we learn what matters about food.

Access to nutritious food from sustainable sources is a primary responsibility of any functional culture. May all beings be fed and may all beings be happy.

A decade ago, at an organic food con-

ference, women from rural India told of their fight to keep their village's soil and food clean of toxins. A t-shirt message starkly read, “Food without poison is a must for life”. They were in a battle to keep high tech patented genetically altered terminator seeds, and their accompanying chemical herbicides, from displacing hereditary seeds which had, for thousands of years, reproduced life giving free seeds. The gap between the corporate food-for-profit agenda and grassroots sustainable food-for-families was graphic. Monsanto, the same corporation that sued Percy Schmeiser in Canada over copyrighted GMO products, was involved over in India as well.

Health food matters.

When a food product shows up on a store shelf, it is only as good as its ingredients, and the skills and care of its handlers. And the ingredients are only as healthy as the soil it comes from.

We look at food with various levels of understanding. Sometimes companies that manipulate foods intentionally hide the real nature of what they produce. In Canada, for example, labelling genetically modified food is voluntary. Given that most informed eaters would shun

GMO products, voluntarily disclosing that their product contain GMOs is not likely to happen. Deceptive labelling can deceive by omission.

Prior to the industrial chemical revolution there were natural methods of preserving certain foods, drying or pickling being two examples. Chemical preservatives now promise longer shelf life so the product can sit around – sometimes for years – and still be sold. These food products get consumed much later than nature would normally allow. Some preservatives are more natural but most modern ones are synthetic and toxic. It gets tricky when natural-sounding additives are used to greenwash or hide other preservatives. A case in point happened in Canada with the combining of ascorbic acid and sodium benzoate in the cheap two litre plastic bottles of orange looking soda pop sold in supermarkets. The synthetic vitamin C in the form of ascorbic acid chemically reacted to the sodium benzoate when the pop was left out of the fridge and in the sunshine on a hot summer afternoon. The ascorbic acid broke down the sodium benzoate into sodium and benzene. Benzene is a known carcinogen. Unwittingly, thirsty people gulped down the sugar-coated poison thinking it was okay.

So as we eat our way through a lifetime of food, we absorb what is in our diet. Like the proverbial frog in hot water we slowly get cooked. If we eat food with carcinogens we toxify our cells, some even to the point of immune collapse where diseases take over the organism.

Food of course is not the only vector of unwanted contaminants, but it is one we do have a some choice over. We can eat the highly refined, sugar, salt, preservative-laden unfresh food, or an apple, avocado or pumpkin seeds for snacks each day.

We make ourselves healthy or unhealthy one bite at a time. And how we chew our food matters too, in whether we assimilate what we consume. Chewing our liquids and drinking our solids engages our mouth saliva to begin the process of digestion. Remember, if our teeth do not chew our foods then our stomach must.

continued p.12...



BC's David and Goliath saga

DRUG BUST Alan Cassels

HEALTH

Can evidence-based medicine win?

I offer you a parable – perhaps the parable of our time. Pull up a chair and start imagining. Imagine being a big group of very powerful and profitable companies whose main business is the manufacturing of pharmaceuticals. You are so influential that government ministers promptly return your calls. You keep some of the most powerful people within the legal and medical communities on your payroll. You invite yourself to lead government task forces and other agenda-setting activities and are considered so mighty that only fools would dare challenge your decrees. When it comes to leverage, you play a good game. You know how to force governments to have some “skin in the game” when it comes to paying the hefty costs of researching and developing your products. It’s not that you are a bully or anything; you are actually quite polite and congenial. Yet, at the same time, you and your members are very, very angry.

You are angry because not everyone considers the good products you produce and the good works conducted on your behalf by many of your favoured charities to be so special. Some even question whether your products are worth what you charge for them. Some even say they didn’t live up to their claims. Even worse, some believe your products make some people sicker. Those heretics might be small in number, but they are vocal. They constitute an unpleasant obstacle and prevent you from expanding your empire, blocking you from

earning higher shareholder profits that are your due. With your great strength and wealth, some say you’re like Goliath because, in contrast to this pesky, nay-saying and ill-equipped David, you could easily overpower and smite him dead.

What makes you really angry is that this David’s skepticism could threaten to destroy other markets around the country. This sort of pesky impertinence could seriously harm your bottom line so you have to act, and act decisively.

This biblical parable is currently

It might be more accurate to call this particular BC-based David “evidence-based medicine.” Yet, in the eyes of Goliath, David is best characterized by the pharmaceutical industry’s pesky foe: UBC’s Therapeutics Initiative.

The world renowned Therapeutics Initiative (TI) was established by the BC provincial government in 1994 and planted at the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics at UBC. This group of researchers, university professors and experts in clinical research provides valuable analysis and insight

New Brunswick, our provincial drug bill would be about 50 percent higher than it is right now. It currently hovers around \$1 billion per year.

In BC, the Therapeutics Initiative has strived to educate doctors about the relative prices (and therapeutic values) of new drugs and while some critics say it tends to favour older, cheaper drugs, its analyses ignore the pharmaceutical industry’s marketing pitches and zero in on what the evidence shows.

Goliaths from the drug world have been trying to slay the Davids of evidence-based medicine for years now, funding political parties, patient groups and specialists in order to build cases for the new drugs they will pitch to governments, physicians and patients. They supply money to universities and research institutes while claiming to politicians they are there to help “grow the knowledge economy.”

Despite how much we love our towers of higher learning, hang out at any of the world’s major universities these days and you will catch the unmistakable whiff of commercialism, where plenty of Goliaths are cutting deals to divert publicly-funded, high-octane thinking into profitable and patentable products. Discussion of higher purposes and human fulfillment in universities is passé; the dominant theme is the drive for the respect and prestige that comes along with telling everyone we’re “Open for Business.”

If the government does away with the Therapeutics Initiative because of some sweetheart deal provided to UBC by Goliath, we should expect to see a body count. Wasn’t it the TI that sent out early alarm bells, asking physicians to pause before writing new prescriptions for drugs like Celebrex and Vioxx? Vioxx is likely responsible for more than 50,000 deaths in the US alone. I remember when the TI’s researchers were accused of being naysayers when they were asking physicians to be careful about prescribing this particular drug and to question the science behind the intense marketing.

Here in BC, there is growing evidence that Goliath is fortifying its battle with David by enticing UBC with lots of riches. There are rumours of buildings and bigger and well-equipped centres of research and drug discovery. The bribes have to be big because the payoff (half a billion dollars per year) is huge. Any government hoping to kill the TI and expecting a payoff should be asking not

continued p.17...

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being played out right here in BC. Not in the full sheen of media lights, of course, but in the shadows and backrooms and offices of the legislature. In government ministries and universities. In halls redolent with the scent of power, prestige and privilege. The David and Goliath scenario could be an allegory for the forces of science against the forces of commerce, where we know David and his science don’t stand a chance.

into the value of pharmaceuticals. The TI has been involved in educating medical students and practising physicians in BC for nearly 15 years and has developed an international following. While it is often accused of setting BC government drug policy, its role is limited to examining, synthesizing and discussing the evidence around drugs. It has a “just the facts ma’am” approach to clinical research.

Sadly, most physicians, after formal training in medical school, will learn about new drugs mostly from pharmaceutical companies. These doctors urgently need a group like the TI, which can provide balanced and current assessments of new drugs. Drug companies maintain it is their job to convince physicians of the value of new drug products; they spend upwards of \$3 billion per year doing just that, an amount larger than the collective budgets of all medical schools in Canada. The fact that TI maintains its distance from the drug companies is one of the true sources of Goliath’s anger: he is unable to influence the key agency that makes drug evidence available to BC physicians.

You can imagine Goliath’s anger when he examines drug expenditures across Canada and finds a huge “missing market” for drugs in BC, worth close to \$500 million per year. On a per capita basis, if BC residents spent as much on drugs as people in Quebec and

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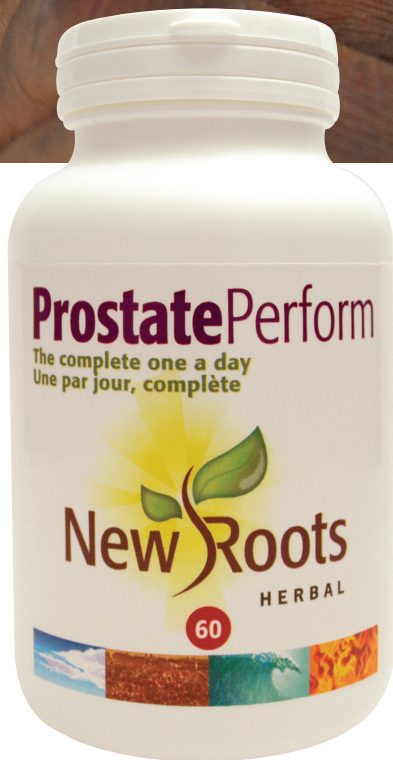
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Raw revolution

NUTRISPEAK Vesanto Melina MS, RD

The raw foods movement is making headlines. Why? Reasons include awareness about the environmental impacts of our food choices, interest in going organic and the desire to eat lower on the food chain. And across North America, people are viewing their expanding waistlines with horror. Centring one's diet on raw plant foods offers a mighty appealing solution.

Why is this a solution? One reason is that some of us consumers have trouble being moderate. For example, if there's a bottle of wine or a case of beer handy, we'll chug-a-lug or sip our way through

and does she know how to tantalize our senses with amazing food! On Saturday November 22, Cherie offers a FUNDamentals of Raw Nutrition Intensive course. (Location: Langley, 40 minutes east of Vancouver's city hall, plus you'll see the WindSong Cohousing Community, an architectural achievement.)

I had the pleasure of taking courses at Cherie's school in Fort Bragg, California, midway between San Francisco and the California-Oregon border (check out www.rawfoodchef.com). These courses changed my relationship with food. Novices and experts from Washington

Across North America, people are viewing their expanding waistlines with horror. Centring one's diet on raw plant foods offers a mighty appealing solution.

the whole thing. To save ourselves, we join AA, where there's a clear line. No alcohol at all. Period. Similarly, if we have cigarettes around, we can't resist smoking. Our only way out is to quit, with no cigarettes in the house.

When it comes to food, we can't stop ourselves from eating the whole loaf of fresh bread, chocolate cake, bucket of chicken or bag of chips. Yet, if we want to quit, how do we manage? We can't enrol our higher power in helping us to abstain entirely from food. We must eat something!

Raw food to the rescue. It allows us to draw a clear line. Bread, butter, cake, fried chicken and chips all are on the other side of the line, where we don't go. Yet we have plenty to eat.

At first glance, this looks far too radical. But doesn't giving up alcohol seem radical to a boozier? It seems that the person's entire social life will vanish and there will be no way to relax. But after taking the leap, new horizons open: one discovers non-drinking friends and finds excellent ways to reduce stress.

With raw foods, what are our choices? We head for the market's colourful produce section. We load our cart with every type of fruit and explore all the veggies that can be eaten uncooked. Then we veer over to the nuts and seeds department.

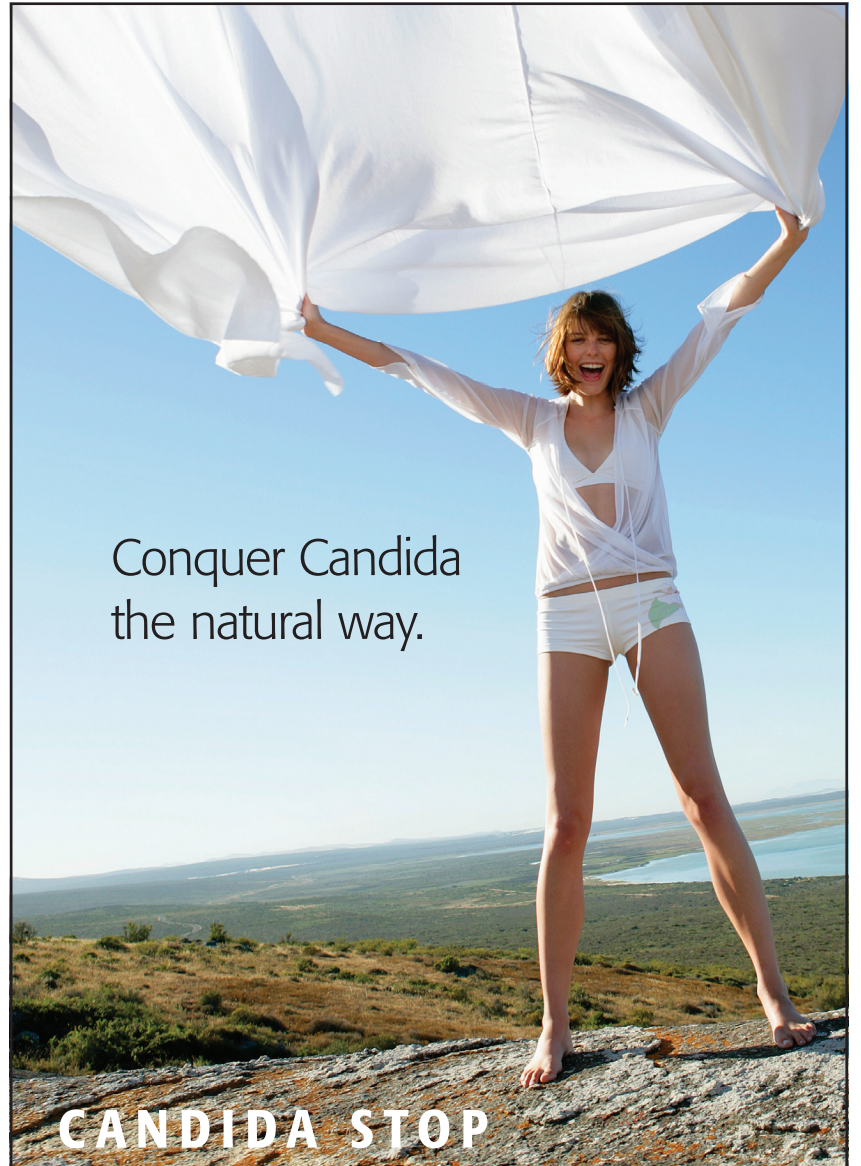
If a raw, or mainly raw, approach interests you, several opportunities for information are available this month: a Raw Food Revolution event takes place in Vancouver on November 20 with my delightful co-author Cherie Soria. This is one fit, slim, vibrant woman

DC, Tokyo and from across America and Europe flock to this school. Some train as raw chefs. Others learn new ways of eating for disease prevention or weight loss. We are fortunate to have this master chef here.

Also in Vancouver, on the evening of Wednesday November 12, two colleagues from Cherie's school, Karin and Rick Dina, present an Introduction to Raw Food Nutrition. On the following weekend (November 15-16), they present the Science of Raw Food Nutrition – it has had rave reviews – in Langley.

Raw doesn't have to mean chilly. Here are a few tips that help raw enthusiasts through colder months. We can start our day with muesli or a crunchy buckwheat granola or cinnamon oatmeal, adding fruit and warm almond milk. We might choose sprouted grain bread (See recipes in our new *Raw Food Revolution Diet*, also titled *Raw Revolution Diet*.) In smoothies and blended soups, we can use warm or hot water. We can wash or soak our produce in warm or hot water for a few minutes. We begin our meal with a cup of warm miso soup or ginger tea. We snack on almond butter with apples or bananas. And for some, it works best to combine a mainly raw diet with baked or steamed root vegetables or hearty bean and lentil soups.

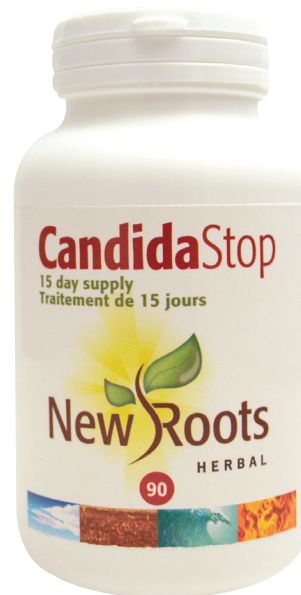
Vesanto Melina is a registered dietitian (www.nutrispeak.com) For further details about these and other raw events, visit www.rawbc.org or call 778-737-8852.



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Letters to the editor

Never voted for Bush

Greetings from Punxsutawney Pennsylvania and the Inner Circle of the Punxsutanwey Groundhog Club. Believe it or not, we track what people are saying about our friend Phil so I read your commentary. In no way is Phil commenting on your remarks. He is really much more concerned about weather. I on the other hand say: I never voted for Bush and want our friends in other countries to know that I am a proud American, but I believe that his decisions are not consistent with what many people feel. So the world may hate us but I hope they know that with a less than 50% approval rating...many of us are waiting for the next president to re establish our reputation in the world. Hang in there with us.

*Ben Hughes,
Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania*

Ruined reputation

Now can we leave IraqNam and Afghanistan? We pissed away billions to support US oil fascism, and ruined our nation's reputation in so-doing. Meanwhile, record numbers of homeless people and families, undernourished children, and failling young people grow, even as we pump up the BS for BC's version of the Olympic Follies. What's next?

*All the best,
Joseph E Fasciani
now 65, who cannot "retire".*

Dear Alan Cassels

It's about time someone wrote what I have been suspecting! I've never been so furiously inspired in all my 24 years... yet I feel helpless to do anything about the current situation. I picked up an April 2008 copy of Common Ground at the Health Food Store in Penticton and have been blown away by the quality of the articles, yours being the icing on the proverbial cake. My step-grandfather, who has been more of a grandpappy than my real ones, has just gone through an 'assessment' in a care facility and luckily passed easily. Leading up to this joke, he was heavily medicated by his common law wife (my real grandmother who is not much of anything to me, unfortunately) and could barely function normally. I remember eating dinner with him one evening and he could barely find his fork, let alone his mouth. It turns out he was being force fed a deadly mixture of sleeping pills that completely rendered him useless. I had no idea of this at the time and attributed it to his brain tumor. I just remember feeling horrible for him as he laid his hands in his beloved chinese food after struggling to open a packet of sweet and sour sauce.

I agree with your article 100% and

have no doubt in my mind that everything going on right now is profit driven. I hope to continue discovering more articles as informative and open minded as yours in the near future! Thank you,

Rich

A new way of thinking

Last week the evil organization Al Qaeda encouraged it's member to attack the USA so that McCain might win the USA election. Well today the most powerful branch of international terrorism, Bush and his cohorts, attacked a village in Syria to oblige Al Qaeda's wishes in a terrorist act that left eight people dead. It matters not if any of those killed by Bush's New World Order were guilty of crimes of warring (that will possibly be known soon), what is clear is that Bush is guilty of killing these eight human beings. What is clear is that Bush is guilty of yet another act of State Based Terrorism likely designed to give McCain a boost in the election. If true that's an even more scathing and cynical of Bush who already has the blood of at least many hundreds of thousands of people on his hands.

We need to find a new way of thinking to stop these wars. My way is to point out the war crimes, the killing crimes, of State Based Actors such as Bush and his agents of destruction. My way it to promote the notion that Governments right to War be revoked by the citizens of each Government in the world.

Act now. Revoke the Canadian Government's right to War. Revoke your Queen's right to War. Take that right away from her. Make no mistake about it Canada is still based upon the primitive notion of a Monarchy where the Sovereign Power to wage War sits. It's time to shed that power from your government. Let your MP know, let your PM know that you revoke his power to wage War, that you revoke Parliament's power to wage War.

Act now in America if you are a citizen there. Let's your congressmen know. Let your presidential candidate know.

If enough Canadians or Americans do this - a clear majority of 60% - then it will be binding upon the war mongers in Canada! A citizens referendum.

Peace, prosperity and long life,
*Peter William, a Concerned Human
Being Living on Earth the one home we
have in the Known Universe!*

Best of Cuba

Hurricanes Gustav and Ike were devastating. Now islanders are working hard to make repairs. They want everything in shape as the 50th Anniversary of the Revolution approaches.

And, they want you to be part of this historic event during New Years!

Many people ask us how to help Cuba. Cubans say: Come and visit us! In doing so, you extend both economic AND moral support.

Together, we've launched two special tours for the holidays for you to experience the warmth, beauty, mystery and friendship that characterizes the safest, most festive destination in the Americas:

- *Cuba Discovery and Adventure Tour* from Dec 28, 2008 to Jan 4, 2009. Geared to families and friends who deserve a break far from "civilization" in a tropical paradise. Eight days of action packed culture and nature on this best of Cuba tour. A mountaintop excursion in Soviet Army trucks, visit to a self-sustaining rural eco-community, four days in an all-inclusive beach resort, hot Latin music and dance, and fine dining -- all in five-star comfort. Details at BestOfCuba.ca

- *50th Anniversary of the Cuban Revolution Tour* from Dec 27, 2008 to Jan 3, 2009. With change in the winds, what better time to visit Cuba and celebrate with the Cuban people on this most historic occasion? Participants will witness the rich fabric of island culture and have fun. An ideal tour for those who believe, as the Cubans do, that a better world is possible. Itinerary and costs at Cuba-Solidarity.ca

Here are two education programs:

- The ESL Cuba Volunteer departs to Cuba on November 8, 2008 for three weeks. It's a small delegation of retired educators, ESL teachers and altruists who help Cuban youth at the university and primary level learn English. It's a life-changing experience. See CubaVolunteer.com

- Teachers Introduction Tour to Cuba from Dec 27, 2008 to Jan 3, 2009. Participants will explore the island's renowned culture of social progress, free education, universal health care, and peace. They'll learn about Cuban efforts to construct a more equal society directly from its people. And, they'll stay at the luxurious five star Hotel Habana Libre surrounded by the best Latin Jazz venues, just several blocks from the sea. See the details at HelloCuba.ca

Our main website at CubaFriends.ca hosts a wealth of fascinating reading on Cuban culture and history ranging from Jazz, Cigars, Libraries and Art to Law, Health Care, Education, Nature, Gays, IWD and May Day. Check it out and share it with your friends.

Contact us with any questions -- we're here to help make Cuba possible for you.

*All the best,
Marcel Hatch, Education Director
708 - 207 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, BC V6B 1H7 Canada*

Wash away the killer cleaners

...or how not to kill your cleaning staff

by Peter Bromley

HEALTH



source photo: Teamarbeit

Ever wonder what it's going to take to get rid of the toxic cleaners in our homes, workplaces and the environment? Kevin Daum wonders about this every day because that's his job. Kevin Daum is an entrepreneur and inventor who formulates, manufactures and sells green cleaners. Over the last fifteen years he has spearheaded the development of a company called Environmental Building Science Inc. The goal of EBS is to solve global oil pollution and toxic cleaner problems by changing how we clean at home and at work. The company has turned this ideal into Oil Lift and other Lift cleaning products now available in retail stores nationwide.

You might think such enterprise would be easy considering all the talk about

going green. The truth is that Kevin's people spend most of their time re-educating prospective customers. And that's a real challenge despite countless stories in the media about switching away from toxic cleaners.

In North America, toxic cleaning products are a part of the domestic landscape, but few people realize that spraying poison on a surface or adding it to their laundry makes it, in a sense, *less* clean. Millions of otherwise rational people have been trained to place a high priority on white laundry and spotless kitchens at the expense of their health. The cure is killing the patient.

So how is this spin accomplished? Kevin says the answer is simple: fear and embarrassment. Advertisers ask if

you care about your children, family, friends and pets. They suggest that if you don't kill the bacteria, you're a bad parent. Fears of being a bad homemaker can be so powerful that they override common sense. For example, you've been trained to believe doing laundry a certain way kills bacteria when in fact laundry machines can be bacteria incubators. Kevin calls this skanky laundry syndrome. To find out if you have

could probably smell it.

So Kevin found himself with a bunch of bleach-smuggling professional cleaners that he had to deprogram. In response, he wrote a booklet called *How to Kill your Cleaning Staff* and provided it as a free download on his website. When they had read the booklet, he devised a clever strategy: he sold the hotel small bottles of two replacement cleaners and asked the staff to go home and find out

Millions of otherwise rational people have been trained to place a high priority on white laundry and spotless kitchens at the expense of their health.

skanky laundry syndrome, he suggests you smell your towels after you use them a couple of times. If they smell of mildew, you most likely need to detoxify your laundry machine.

As an innovator, Kevin is used to thinking outside the detergent box. Consider this: if the average person was given laundry detergent from Brazil they would think that their whites are not clean. Laundry detergent in South America is designed to make your whites have a reddish hue. In North America we're trained to think that white laundry has a bluish hue. It also has to have a chemical smell. Kevin recently had a friend do laundry tests for him; she had removed all the red wine stains and was very happy with the results. Her mother then sniffed the towels. "These aren't clean", she said. "They don't smell like bleach". Most other mammals would run from the scent of chlorine bleach.

So how can we overcome the brainwashing and get rid of toxic cleaners from our homes and workplaces? Recently Kevin was doing a cleaning product replacement audit for a hotel. Many of the cleaning staff were using products they thought were green because the supplier had a green sounding name. The head of housekeeping knew that this was misleading yet she couldn't get her staff to change (at home she uses baking soda, vinegar and lime juice). Even staff members who knew they were using toxic products were reluctant to change because they believed the green cleaners don't work. One of the staff even showed Kevin the bleach she hides in her towels to use when her boss isn't around. They both had a good laugh when Kevin pointed out that her boss

what cleaning problems the cleaners *don't* work on. They could not find any. The illusion that green cleaners are ineffective disappeared.

Kevin's story illustrates the degree to which the purveyors of poison have brainwashed us to continue buying their watered down toxic goo.

So how do we break the cycle? Kevin says the first step is to get educated. To that end, Kevin offers a booklet *How to Kill Your Cleaning Staff* on his website www.oillift.net. Just click on the banner that says fun stuff for free on the left hand column, fill in your name and e-mail. The booklet is automatically sent to you.

The second step is to read and sign Kevin's on-line petition to stop water pollution in your neighbourhood by banning toxic cleaners. With the petition there is a series of six questions. Kevin asks that you answer them honestly as he is trying to determine how much people know about environmental cleaning. You'll be emailed the answers to the questions. And you'll also get a solution for skanky laundry syndrome.

Whether you buy Kevin's products or other eco-certified cleaners, the problem of toxicity in cleaning products needs to be solved. Through education you become part of the solution to get the toxins out of your home and workplace.

Note: Oil Lift, Lift Cleaner and Surface restorer are now available at Canadian Tire, Lordco, Windsor Plywood, Tim-BR-Mart, True Value, Benjamin Moore, and most health food stores. Contact Kevin at info@oillift.net with your cleaning questions or request for a free workplace cleaning product audit



The Canadian Health Food Association selected November as National Natural Food Month in Canada. What a beautiful time of year to be reminded of health with all the lush colour of maple leaves. Colour is an important indicator of how rich in vitamins and minerals certain foods are. May autumn inspire us to choose fruits and vegetables of deep hues for deeper nutrition. Products carefully manufactured from such green, red, blue, purple, orange mineral-laden ingredients form great supplements to augment our diet.

Whole foods are the way nature initially provides humans with abundance. Eat as much fresh raw food as you can. Cook foods in ways that release their nutrients, but avoid overheating and use utensils that are not toxic. Keep food from having contact with aluminum, Teflon or other non-slip plastic compounds. Avoid microwave ovens because they alter the food on an electron level and release free radicals linked to aging and cancer. Don't be a guinea pig. There are other less intrusive ways to prepare what we eat.

Intention effects what ends up on our plate. Those that link our mouths with the original source of sustenance need to honour and respect natural cycles. Principles are more important than pretty packaging when it comes to health and the quality or goodness shows up in the details.

Think of foods as having benefits or side effects as do drugs. Most people would not take drugs if they understood the harm. But they do, because they are not well informed, or believe in so-called experts who would never take the very same drugs they prescribe. In the UK, adverse drug reactions kill about 10,000 (a nasty "side effect") every year, whereas car accident kill about 3,000. Drugs, like cigarettes, are profitable but they also make people sick. The costs are sloughed off to the society rather than the manufacturer being held liable for the damage caused. In Canada we do not allow direct-to-consumer prescription drug advertising as they do in

the USA. Twenty five per cent of TV ads in the USA are drug commercials. The effect is that Americans spend about 50 per cent more on drugs than Canadians.

Three hundred billion dollars are spent on drugs in North America annual-

Junk food compromises one's health to the point of disease because, besides containing toxins, it lacks the basis nutrients needed for bodies to function well. This leads to attempts to rectify the situation with drugs, which can contribute to premature death. These unhealthy faux-foods may make a killing for their producers, but eventually sicken their user. There is an unholy synergy between crappy foods, sedentary lifestyles, pill pushers and pharmaceutical profits.

Nature eventually wins out in the long run. The laws of ecology do not go away. Every thing is connected to everything else, and, we all live down stream from the source and processing of our food. Likewise, there is no such thing as a free lunch. Bad nutrition and toxic food extract their toll in human suffering. Just as one vitamin can cure so many illnesses, so can the deficiency of a vitamin or mineral cause disease. Vitamins, mineral, fibre, and other nutrients – coupled with rest, fresh air and pH balanced clean water – enable a body

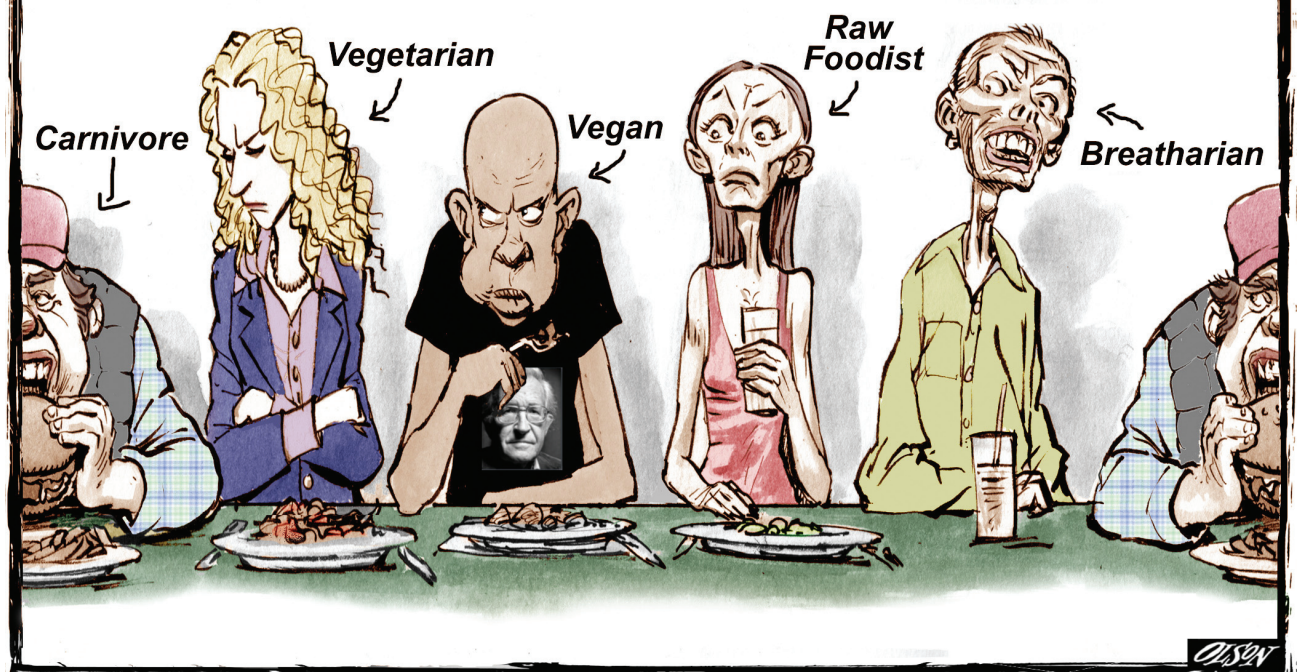
abundance so all are fed. Health Canada sees the light, reverses its drug-heavy approach to treating disease, and invests money to prevent disease.

You may say we are dreamers but we are not the only ones.

In 1976 Mother Teresa came to Vancouver's Habitat for Humanity where she spoke of a hunger that bread cannot satisfy. It is a hunger to be touched, a hunger to be loved and a hunger to belong.

As we celebrate our healthy food choices, let's remember those who have much less than us. Though most starving people live in countries ruined by geopolitical greed and environmental degradation, there are those in our land who are also hungry. Some are malnourished from junk food or poor eating habits, others from hard emotional, mental and financial times. Some are on drugs, some are not. Some smoke and drink, others don't. But we all eat, and as challenging as it gets, if it is not us, who will be our brothers or sisters keeper?

The spectrum of dietary attitudes on the West Coast...



ly, much of which is advertising induced and unnecessary. Many side effects occur for which yet more drugs are prescribed. The combination of drugs bring unexpected results. How many well intended, obedient elders come to harm following their multiple prescriptions religiously? Their A to Z plastic pill organizers give them a false sense of control in an overly chemicalized world, further numbed by loneliness, alcohol and TV (with its booze and drugs ads).

When in doubt, use natural nutrition and a healthy lifestyle to improve your well-being.

to be nourished and heal.

Imagine the social impact of chronic well-being and a highly contagious epidemic of health. Well-informed and inspired people choosing their foods wisely with care, respect and gratitude. The joy of healthy food spreads like wildfire across our land nourishing all in its path. People stop hurting themselves with unconscious habits around food. We honour the land along with the energy required to grow and deliver foods to market. There is an awaking of compassion for all those who hunger to better organize and distribute nature's

By helping others, magically we too are helped. We are related, we belong.

So share some food with a street person or a neighbour you haven't yet met. Take time to see him or her fully as a person and part of the larger human family, a fellow traveller in this world of wonders. We each have our story to tell and our need to be heard. Break bread with the beggar on the street; share a handful of grapes. This too is a remembrance. Like the almond, we are a human tree capable of spreading comfort and joy. Spice life with compassion so we too can nourish our deep spirit inside.



Weed wisdom

ORGANICS

ON THE GARDEN PATH Carolyn Herriot

A weed is a wild herb springing where it is not wanted.

– Concise Oxford Dictionary

Weed seeds arrive with birds, on the wind, on our shoes and clothing and on a pet's fur. They are persistent, lying dormant until conditions are just right for germination. Digging the soil brings weed seeds up to the surface, which helps them germinate. Perennial weeds can spread quickly by division when each little piece roots into a new plant. These are two good reasons to practise no-dig gardening and regular mulching.

Tip: Hoe weeds before they set seed and multiply your problem.

A garden will always have weeds, but there's a great deal to be learned from observing them. There's always a good reason why weeds spring up in the first place. An infestation points to an imbalance in the soil, such as poor drainage, lack of aeration, low fertility or a mineral deficiency. Weeds often thrive in poor soils, which indicates that the soil is deficient in the essentials for healthy plant growth.

Many perennial weeds are deep rooted, penetrating into the sub-soil where they access trace elements and minerals. When they decompose, their leaves and stems enrich the soil with these valuable elements, which may not otherwise be available to shallow-rooted plants. It's important to return weeds to the soil for this reason, either by composting them or turning them under to decay in the garden. Deep roots also penetrate to aerate soil, helping with drainage. Dandelions, which thrive on heavy clay soils, are great at this.

Weeds can be used as indicators of general problems and they can even correct imbalances and deficiencies. Weeds disappear when these conditions are corrected and soil conditions favour the growth of other plants – hopefully, not other weeds. The solution to a weed infestation, therefore, is to improve soil fertility, not to zap the area with soil-destroying herbicides. As Ralph Waldo Emerson noted, a weed is a "...plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered."

What weeds can tell us:

- Daisies, rich in calcium, thrive on lawns lacking in lime. When daisies decompose, they add calcium to correct this deficiency.
- Equisetum (horsetail) indicates an acid, clay soil in need of drainage. If the soil is drained and fertility increases, horse-

tail will disappear.

- Docks, sorrel and thistles indicate heavy, badly drained and acid soils.
- Dandelions indicate that the soil lacks essential minerals and elements.
- Clovers, medicks, vetches and wild peas (legumes) indicate a nitrogen deficiency and can correct this condition in the soil.
- Creeping buttercup thrives in heavy, poorly drained soils.
- Bindweed generally thrives in sandy soils.
- Stinging nettles prefer light, sandy soils. High in nitrogen, nettles stimulate the growth of plants nearby.
- Chickweed, groundsel, chicory and lambsquarters are shallow-rooted weeds that grow in fertile conditions. They indicate an improvement in fertility.

Comfrey and stinging nettles make high quality liquid fertilizers. By extracting minerals from the sub-soil and storing them in their leaves, nettles and comfrey become rich in nitrogen, potassium and calcium. Nettles are also high in iron. When nettle leaves are steeped in rainwater, the resulting concentrate can be used as a feed, releasing nutrients to plants.

Nature never leaves the ground uncovered. In winter, weeds give protection from rains and their roots penetrate to aid with drainage. They also provide a store of food for soil bacteria, which can then remain active to provide food for plants in spring. Where groundcovers remain and flourish in winter, the result is increased soil fertility.

Carolyn Herriot is author of A Year on the Garden Path: A 52-Week Organic Gardening Guide. She grows Seeds of Victoria at The Garden Path Centre for Sustainable Living (www.earthfuture.com/gardenpath). Read her blog at www.gardenwise.ca

Weeds feed the flyers

- *Asclepias* (milkweed): butterflies
- *Cirsium* spp. (thistles): butterflies, goldfinches
- *Chenopodium* spp. (lambsquarters): songbirds
- *Melilotus* spp. (sweet clover): butterflies
- *Stellaria media* (chickweed): songbirds
- *Taraxacum* spp. (dandelions): goldfinches, Pine Siskins
- *Trifolium* spp. (clover): butterflies
- *Urtica dioica* (nettles): butterflies

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Positive change

THE POWER OF NOW Eckhart Tolle

If you find your life situation unsatisfactory or even intolerable, it is only by surrendering first that you can break the unconscious resistance pattern that perpetuates that situation. Surrender is perfectly compatible with taking action, initiating change or achieving goals. But, in the surrendered state, a totally different energy, a different quality, flows into your doing. Surrender reconnects you with the source-energy of Being, and if your doing is infused with Being, it becomes a joyful celebration of life energy that takes you more deeply into the Now.

Through non-resistance, the quality of your consciousness and, therefore,

instant and surrender to what is. That's the flashlight cutting through the fog. Your state of consciousness then ceases to be controlled by external conditions. You are no longer coming from reaction and resistance.

Ask yourself, "Is there anything I can do to change the situation, improve it or remove myself from it?" If so, take appropriate action. Focus not on the one hundred things that you will, or may, have to do at some future time, but on the one thing that you can do now. This doesn't mean you should not do any planning. It may well be that planning is the one thing you can do now. But make sure you don't start to

.....
When you enter this timeless dimension of the present, change often comes about without a great deal of doing. Life becomes helpful and cooperative.
.....

the quality of whatever you are doing or creating is enhanced immeasurably. The results will then look after themselves and reflect that quality. We could call this surrendered action. It is not work as we have known it for thousands of years. As more humans awaken, the word work is going to disappear from our vocabulary and perhaps a new word will be created to replace it.

The quality of your consciousness at this moment is the main determinant of what kind of future you will experience, so to surrender is the most important thing you can do to bring about positive change. Any action you take is secondary. No truly positive action can arise out of an unsundered state of consciousness.

I can see that if I am in a situation that is unpleasant or unsatisfactory and I completely accept the moment as it is, there will be no suffering or unhappiness. I will have risen above it. But I still can't quite see where the energy or motivation for taking action and bringing about change would come from if there isn't a certain amount of dissatisfaction.

In the state of surrender, you see very clearly what needs to be done and you take action, doing and focusing on one thing at a time. Learn from nature. See how everything gets accomplished and how the miracle of life unfolds without dissatisfaction or unhappiness. That's why Jesus said, "Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin..."

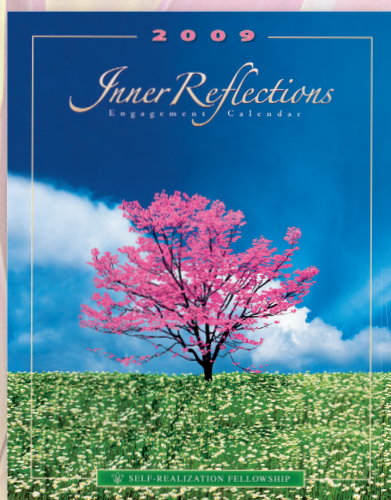
If your overall situation is unsatisfactory or unpleasant, separate out this

run "mental movies," project yourself into the future and so lose the Now. Any action you take may not bear fruit immediately. Until it does, do not resist what is.

If there is no action you can take and you cannot remove yourself from the situation, use the situation to make yourself go more deeply into surrender, more deeply into the Now, more deeply into Being. When you enter this timeless dimension of the present, change often comes about in strange ways without the need for a great deal of doing on your part. Life becomes helpful and cooperative. If inner factors such as fear, guilt, or inertia prevented you from taking action, they will dissolve in the light of your conscious presence.

Start by acknowledging that there is resistance. Look at the thought process involved. Feel the energy of the emotion. By witnessing the resistance, you will see that it serves no purpose. By focusing all your attention on the Now, the unconscious resistance is made conscious and that is the end of it. You cannot be conscious and unhappy, conscious and in negativity. Negativity, unhappiness or suffering in whatever form means that there is resistance, and resistance is always unconscious.

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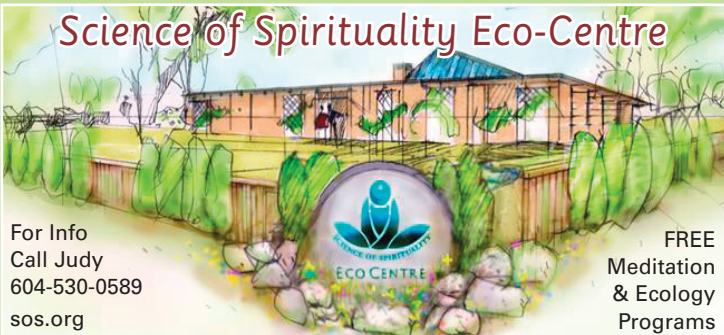
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Dare to be you

UNIVERSE WITHIN Gwen Randall-Young

"This above all: to thine own self be true and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man." – William Shakespeare

Many of the clients I work with experience frustration as a result of being people pleasers most of their lives. Generally, this process begins in childhood because it serves a purpose for ego. However, for many people, dissatisfaction and even resentment set in at some point in adulthood.

Very early in life, a child learns that behaving in ways that make others happy brings rewards. He also learns that behaviour that annoys or upsets oth-

SPIRITUALITY

After years of performing for the external audience, it can be hard to know who the real self truly is. Many would not even know what they would do in their lives, or what they would be passionate about, if they were no longer dependent on the good opinion of others. Yet they begin to feel a growing frustration and resentment and the sense they are not fulfilling themselves. This nudging could well be the work of soul, which knows that a very important aspect of our time on Earth is the full realization of our own uniqueness.

Soul knows that a very important aspect of our time on Earth is the full realization of our own uniqueness.

ers brings the opposite. For young children, regardless of how much parents express their love, an angry or upset parent is associated with a loss, or, at the very least, a disruption in the flow of love to the child.

Children are very adept at reading parental emotions, body language and facial expressions. If parents react with anger and judgment to a child's misbehaviour, rather than accepting the child but correcting the behaviour, the child will feel rejected. Not liking this feeling, the child learns what to do to gain acceptance, which is associated with being loved and lovable. Without acceptance, the child feels both unloved and unlovable.

For some, this association between disappointing others and being unlovable persists throughout life. This is especially true for those who are quite sensitive or who have low self-esteem. The gauge for their value exists outside of themselves. It is like looking at the thermometer outside the kitchen window and assuming the reading applies to the temperature inside.

This is the perception ego develops and it is reinforced repeatedly. In school, the answer the teacher is looking for is more important to the child than his own creative response. Dressing like others takes precedence over putting together unique ensembles. In later years, it is more important to agree with others than to speak one's truth and risk offending anyone. Doing what others want becomes a greater priority than honouring oneself.

Our essence, or essential self, is like a seed that wants to grow. Unfortunately, for so many of us, the people in our lives did not nurture that seed. Instead, they tended to the garden in their own mind about who we were or how we should be. Under these conditions, the seed of our true self could not even begin to germinate.

Time, however, moves on, and soul realizes that a good portion of our time here has elapsed; it is time to get on with knowing and expressing our authentic self. Slowly but surely we become restless. We begin to notice that what we are thinking and feeling inside does not match what we are doing or expressing on the outside.

We begin to feel conflicted, and perhaps, for the first time, realize we are responding to external signals rather than to our own inner signals. There may follow a confusing and tumultuous time as we grapple with which signals to follow. The inner signals reveal what we want to do; the outer, what we think we should do. As we begin to validate our inner voice – our own truth and knowing – we begin the journey back to self.

It is not always easy and others may balk at our changes, but it is the road we came to travel, and it is waiting.

Gwen Randall-Young is a psychotherapist in private practice and author of *Growing Into Soul: The Next Step in Human Evolution*. For articles and information about her books and "Deep Powerful Change" personal growth/hypnosis CDs, visit www.gwen.ca



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Hidden Wisdom of the Tao

a conversation with Dr. Wayne Dyer

by Laurie Nadel

Wayne Dyer appears at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre in Vancouver on December 1st.

Q : What is the Tao Te Ching?

A: The Tao Te Ching is the wisest, most influential book ever written. It was written 2500 years ago, at the time of Confucius by a Chinese master named Lao Tzu. The Tao offers a way of living with integrity. In fact, Lao Tzu believed that people do not need rules. Just raise your children to grow up and stay connected with the Tao.

Q: Can you tell us more about the Tao?

A: It contains 81 verses. You can read it in an hour and a half. Each of those 81 verses begins with living contentment and peace. When you live the Tao, you become peace, rather than talking about it. The Tao has no rules. The Tao does nothing but it leaves nothing undone. It does not interfere. It allows and is constantly creating.

Q: You grew up without a father, spending time in foster homes during your childhood. Yet you dedicated this book to him. Why?

A: My father walked out on our family. I never saw him and have no memory of him. Living the Tao, I am able to extend love to him and thank him for being who he was. People do what they know how to do. I see now, it's all perfect.

Q: How has writing a book changed your life?

A: Two years ago, when I turned 65, I started on the Tao. I told my secretary to sell everything and give everything away. I walked away from it. The Tao teaches us to let go of things. Use the 80/20 rule. If you take all your clothes, you'll find out that you only wear 20 percent of them. You just don't wear 80 percent. Take what you have and don't use and circulate it. Give stuff to people who truly need it.

Q: Why is trusting your intuition essential for living a happy life?

A: Intuition is getting closer to your source. It's God talking to you. You get more intuitive insights as you get closer to God. True happiness comes from knowing you are connected to something so grand and so great...and so much bigger than your puny little ego. It's an inner vision that everyone has. You get to a point where you can totally rely on it. When I am taking calls, something will flash through my mind. Maybe that caller is in Nova Scotia or Wisconsin. I don't know who he or she is. And I will ask that person about a name that has flashed through my mind. Intuition has never let me down.

Q: What rules does the Tao offer for a happy life?

A: The Tao has no rules. When you run your life by rules, you've left the Tao. It speaks of noninterference and nonviolence. You can't be a person of the Tao and have an enemy. Never use enemy and I in the same sentence. When you use violence to stop what you don't like, you create a new generation of people who are going to go after people who bombed their parents' village. Every time you use force, you create a counterforce. Think about how you get rid of dandelions: You don't go out with a shovel and start smacking them because all of those fuzzballs go up into the air, creating more dandelions. Violence begets more violence. The Tao says that any single person in any line of violence... whether you drive trucks, design weapons, sell guns.... there are hundreds of links in the chain. If one person refuses to deliver them or design them or sell them, you have stopped the chain.

Q: How can you live without laws and rules?

A: We need to lead by an inner kind of law that connects us to the source of all things. We are all pieces of God. We have to find the highest place within ourselves that wants to give. The Tao says that Source wants us to allow things to be. You have to plant a seed and leave it alone. It was probably a lawyer who said that we're not a nation of people, we are a nation of laws. We are not a nation of rules. We are a species of beings who have a higher place within ourselves and a higher connection to

the Source of all creation.

Q: Can you give us an example?

A: A lot of the Tao has to do with water. Water is the softest of all things, yet it is the most powerful. The ocean stays low because it patiently allows all things to flow into it. It is always flexible. You can't grasp it. The Tao is not about grasping but allowing, like water.

Q: You are the father of 8 children, ages 17 - 40, and grandfather of 5 kids. How can the Tao help us to be better parents?

A: Catch them doing something right instead of something wrong. Remind them of their greatness on a daily basis. Constantly let them know you care about them. But you also have to let go. The term "enough is enough" is out of the Tao. As parents, you have to know when not to interfere with your children's lives. You have to know when to not push and let them make mistakes and make their own decisions. Involve your children in your passions and hobbies. We taught all of our children to meditate. We took them on walking meditations. They laughed but now they say it was one of the most important things in their life. Expose them to great ideas. Let them see you doing things you love. Then you will respect your children's passions as they grow.

Q: You write that thoughts create reality. What do you mean?

A: We are what we think about. If what we think about is what we don't like, then why are we surprised when what we don't like turns up in our life? If you think about all the things that are wrong in your relationship, then you will continue to attract what you don't like.... even what you don't like in yourself and in your children. You have to monitor what you think about. Peacemakers never put their thoughts on what they don't want, only on what they intend to create and what they intend to manifest.

Q: How does that work? It sounds bewildering.

A: Excellent! Sell your cleverness and purchase bewilderment! The Tao says to stop trying to figure it all out and just be in a state of awe. Then how could you not love yourself? The best way to show love to God is by loving each other. When enough of us do that, we'll love everybody.

Q: Isn't that naive?

A: When you think from this perspective, on what's possible, then you always have hope. You always know that there is a way.

Q: You mention God a lot. How are you so certain?

A: Each person has trillions of cells. Our planets are specks of energy. The sun is 93 million miles away. If it was 2 feet closer we would burn up and if it was 2 feet further we would freeze. You are part of that creative infinite organizing intelligence. The first 9 months of your life you turned everything over to God. You didn't worry about whether your kidneys would show up. And you showed up into the world and you were turned over to people who said, "We'll take it from here." And that was your mistake. Your task is to know that God doesn't make mistakes. How could you believe that you are not worthy of yourself? You came out of that creative infinite organizing intelligence.

Q: How can all this make me happy?

A: Stop looking for happiness. It's an inside job. To live the Tao means to live peace. Be it. Radiate it out. When you have to choose between being kind and being right, it's always better to be kind.

Wayne Dyer appears at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre in Vancouver on December 1. For more information, see inside back cover of this issue.

Laurie Nadel, Ph.D. is the author of Sixth Sense: Unlocking Your Ultimate Mind Power.



Kindness, music, and the power of positive thinking

by Reg Neufeld

One of my first experiences with the work of the Kindness Foundation occurred at a World Kindness Concert in the fall of 2006, thanks to a new friend Brock Tully. I had met Brock the previous year while attending a workshop in Abbotsford that focused on self-responsibility and the concept that our thinking habits determine our attitudes and life experiences.

During coffee and lunch breaks I learned that Brock had twice cycled 18,000 kilometers around North America to spread a simple message: Be More Kind. I also learned that he and Nadine Marshall had co-founded a grass roots organization called KindActs, now the Kindness Foundation of Canada.

In 2001 KindActs launched the first ever World Kindness Concert in support of World Kindness Day. It became an annual event. So, six years after its inception, I was to experience the concert for myself. And what a heart-opening experience it was. There was something in the

air, an energy unlike any concert I had ever attended.

Most of the people there seemed genuinely happy and peaceful. They were considerate and respectful of each other, with lots of eye contact. There was a flow of warmth connecting us all that had nothing to do with the room temperature.

Soon the show began, emceed by Brock himself. The musical acts were an eclectic mix of well-known veterans and amazing young talent, and each time I thought it couldn't get any better, it did. The music was incredible – inspiring, uplifting, and straight from the heart. The musicians were having fun and truly on fire.

That was November 2006, and the work of the Foundation continues apace.

First, there was the World Kindness Concert 2007 which was even more inspiring than the last.

Second, the KindActs Coin-spiracy Program for schools and youth groups is positively impacting children and youth. Created in 2002 by Nadine Marshall and

Gail Smit, and supported by concert proceeds, the program invites groups to commit to three acts of kindness ... one for self, one for the environment, and one for another. The purpose, of course, is to encourage kind thought habits. Such a simple shift of focus does have a positive impact on young people's attitudes, behaviors, self-esteem, and how they view, experience and affect the world.

Third, KindActs, now in its 10th year, has improved its organizational structure and changed its name to the Kindness Foundation of Canada. The World Kindness Concert is now called Kindness Sings.

Fourth, Brock Tully is on the road again. Yes that's right. At 61 years of age, Brock hitched a 70 pound trailer to his bike on October 10, hoisted himself into the saddle, and headed off into the sunrise. He will be zig-zagging through the south-western states all winter before heading back to Vancouver in June. His objective? To be the change they want to

see in the world. If you'd like to follow his journey you can go to www.cycleit-forward.org/ and check out his blog.

However, Brock will be taking a short break from his bike. He will be flying home to emcee our Kindness Sings Concert in November.

Musical performers include Shari Ulrich, Jeanette O'Keeffe, Jonas Falle, Michaela Slinger, Monique Creber, Christa Couture, Ivan Boudreau, Steve Elliott, Bing Jensen, Joani Bye, Leon Bibb, Ron Irving, Nhemy Cepeda Jr., Coco Love Alcorn, Carol Ann Fried, Stephen Mitchell, and Leora Cashe. There will be a swinging band composed of Bill Sample, Nathen Aswell, Shawn Soucy, and Eric Reed. The show will be held at the Unity Theatre, 41st and Oak in Vancouver, November 17 and 18.

More information available at: www.worldkindnessconcert.com Or call in Vancouver 604-515-5463 or Abbotsford 604-504-4242

...Drug Bust continued from p. 6

for a building worth a miserly \$50 million, but rather for half a billion per year, every year to perpetuity. That's what David is likely saving us.

BC is a strange province where the cosiness – a sort of chequebook diplomacy – between the current Liberal government and the drug companies that fund their election campaigns is well known. Last year, this cosiness translated into a BC government-appointed Pharmaceutical Task Force, staffed with drug industry lobbyists who produced a report so shoddy it's an embarrassment to anyone involved. The major outcome of the report was the suggestion to scrap the Therapeutics Initiative.

The plot heats up when you recall that back in February of this year the UBC Centre for Drug Research and Development (CDRD) was named as a Centre of Excellence for Commer-

cialization and Research (CECR). The Canadian government plans to kick in \$15 million over five years to "accelerate the translation of health research into high value medicines." Matching funds will come from BC taxpayers, funnelled through groups like the British Columbia Knowledge Development Fund and the British Columbia Innovation Council (BCIC). The latter describes itself as a "one-stop point of access and support to high tech companies, educational institutions, technology industry awareness groups (including regional technology councils), federal science and technology agencies and university research labs." Wow – sounds like a full-on marketing machine for BC high tech. Just what the doctor ordered.

Like most universities, UBC certainly has its own objectives and new pools

of potential research money must seem awfully tempting. UBC's president, Stephen Toope, is a world-respected advocate for human rights and the power of international law. He is one serious and uncompromising dude when it comes to speaking truth to power. But you have to ask yourself: Will Dr. Toope be able to speak truth to the Goliath at the gates of UBC?

It's hard to say. What is certain is that the success of university presidents is usually measured by their ability to increase the university's prestige, size, influence and wealth. And with large numbers of academics and researchers who measure their success by how much research funds they can absorb, Dr. Toope would certainly face a rabid faculty backlash if he questioned the flow of drug funds to UBC.

What a conundrum, eh?

You might think this biblical parable is too much of a stretch because in the real 'modern' world, the Goliaths almost always win. Well, thankfully we have a democracy and there is an election coming up. We can throw out the politics of rule by rude power. We can choose not to support a government that thumbs its nose at evidence-based medicine, one that encourages the drug companies rule the day. OR we could ask for something different. And that difference is something that may mean the choice of life or death for some of us.

Alan Cassels is a drug policy researcher at the University of Victoria a. He served with Stephen Toope as a UN Election Observer in the first all-race elections in South Africa in April, 1994.



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Vote for vision

EARTHFUTURE Guy Dauncey

Once more unto the vote, dear friends! On November 15, we get to vote for a new municipal council – the mayor and councillors who will represent us for the next three years, carrying the hopes and dreams of our communities.

But why do so few people vote? Is it because municipal elections can get pretty dull when candidates are full of vague generalities? “Vote for me! I promise to improve the quality of life and retain a balanced budget...” Blah, blah, blah.

Does blah stand for “Boring Long-winded Abstractions,” sucking the life out of what should be a stunningly exciting period when we debate the

city where bikes do not have to compete with cars. It's totally achievable if we put our minds to it. See www.copenhagenize.com

Contribute to the province's goal of 100,000 solar roofs by 2020: That's only a five percent rate of roof coverage. For a city the size of Vancouver (pop. 612,000), that's 15,000 roofs generating solar electricity or hot water, or both. See www.solarbc.ca

50 percent of all cars and light trucks to be electric or plug-in hybrid electric by 2020: Israel and Denmark are planning for the widespread take-up of electric vehicles through the project known as “Better Place.” Paris, Berlin

Look for specific commitments that can be measured by results.

Look for personal passion and a deep commitment to change.

future and choose new leaders? Maybe they should be called “blandimates,” but beware, their blandness is often code for “I will ensure that business continues as usual and do nothing to rock the boat.”

If you scratch your average blandimate, you'll find a conservative politician who keeps a close relationship with older voters more concerned about keeping their golf games up to par than about any dramatic vision of change or social justice.

But we *do* need change, and urgently. So what should we look for from the candidates for municipal office? Look for specific commitments that can be measured by results. Look for personal passion and a deep commitment to change, such as:

100 percent zero waste by 2030: San Francisco is showing it can be done. The city has already reached 69 percent waste reduction and is aiming at 75 percent by 2010 and zero waste by 2020, without resorting to incineration, which turns waste into toxic air pollution. See www.zwia.org

End homelessness by 2020: Calgary has set a goal to end homelessness within 10 years, which, as well as ending human suffering there, will also save the city \$3.6 billion. Vancouver and Victoria must do the same. See www.ending-homelessness.ca

Increase cycling to 10 percent of all trips by 2015: In Davis, California, 17 percent of all trips made are by bike. In Copenhagen, Denmark, it's 36 percent and the goal is to reach 50 percent by 2015. This means planning for safe, long-distance bike routes throughout the

and Stuttgart are planning to get there under their own steam, through the leadership of their city councils. We need to begin planning right now for a future without oil, before we are left stranded, unable to heat our homes or travel by car. See www.betterplace.com

A community garden in every neighbourhood: We know that locally grown, organic food is better for us, the climate and the planet, so we must create space to make it happen. Seattle shows what's possible with its P-Patch Gardens, and in Oakland, California, the Food Policy Council's goal is that 30 percent of the city's food be produced in or near the city. See www.cityfarmer.org

Engage everyone in the community in reducing their carbon footprints: If we are to make any progress, every household, business, school and organization must start going green. In Britain, the villagers of Ashton Hayes reduced their collective carbon footprint by 20 percent in just one year. If they can do it, so can we. See www.goingcarbonneutral.co.uk

And that's just the start. In Vancouver, Gregor Robertson and the Vision Vancouver team of candidates (council, school and parks boards) has, by far, the best chance of achieving a similar agenda, but only if we vote them all in. Elsewhere, you'll have to choose them individually, candidate by blandimate. See www.votevision.ca

Guy Dauncey is president of the BC Sustainable Energy Association and editor of the free, monthly newsletter EcoNews. www.earthfuture.com



The kids are all right

SCIENCE MATTERS David Suzuki with Faisal Moola

The 21st century is an exciting time for young people. Technology like email and social networking websites makes connecting with people easier than before and Google puts a virtual library on everyone's desk. This current generation of youth has unprecedented exposure to knowledge, and the old adage that knowledge is power still holds true.

I've been approached by different groups to talk to young people at universities. I'm speaking at campuses across

improved since the 1950s.

Back then, many things seemed divided. There were the activist organizations full of young, energetic people demanding change. There were older, established groups that constantly seemed to say, "We agree with you, in principle, but..." Thankfully, things evolved.

I see parallels with the battle against global warming. I hope we are entering a new era in which the old excuses for inaction are no longer given any cre-

This current generation has unprecedented exposure to knowledge, and the old adage that knowledge is power still holds true.

Canada, either in person or by video, on a tour with the Canadian Federation of Students, about global warming and its solutions. My daughter Severn and David Suzuki Foundation CEO Peter Robinson are also speaking at some stops. I'll also speak to young people in Ontario as part of a campaign called Flick Off, which is encouraging people to consider renewable energy as a solution to some of the serious environmental and economic problems our dependence on fossil fuels has created.

Whenever I talk to students, I'm reminded of the joy I experienced as a college student, surrounded by curious classmates who were forming their opinions about the world. Public interest in the environment is at an all-time high today and that's bound to affect the values that students form and the choices they make. Attending college is an exciting phase of life and students should be encouraged to question the way things are.

But I don't envy today's students, even though they have great, new gadgets such as iPods and digital cameras to play with. They are seeing the effects of global warming first-hand. They can see the mess that previous generations have created by ignoring the natural world and living beyond its limits. Today's university students will have to deal with increased smog alert days, clear-cut forests, nuclear waste, overfished marine ecosystem and other environmental problems that older folks have created.

In my college days, I was active in the civil rights movement. The opportunity to right historic wrongs was a powerful incentive. The people I marched with took action and eventually helped change society and repeal discriminatory laws. Is there still racism and bigotry today? Absolutely. But things have certainly

dence and students become active in solving some of the serious problems in the world. There's evidence that this is already occurring. Renewable energy is a very realistic part of the solution, not only for environmental problems, but also for economic difficulties as well, and I think young people can play a major role in pushing for a switch from non-renewable fossil fuels to renewables.

It's heartening to see the number of people saying "yes" instead of "no" to topics such as energy conservation and renewable power. And it's a diverse group. If there is one positive thing to come out of global warming's threat to humanity, it's that it's bringing together different factions to work together for change.

In the not too distant past, environmentalists were treated as a "special interest group" and relegated to the fringes of public discourse. But now we're starting to see organizations as diverse as student groups, major corporations, technology companies, Crown corporations, and financial institutions talking to each other to find solutions to issues such as climate change. The environment may continue to be a "special interest," but it's one that concerns us all.

Today's young people know this. And it's interesting to see them use the tools at their disposal, such as email, blogs, podcasts and social networking sites, to become online activists. Combined with individual action, this is a powerful way to call for change at all levels of society.

When I see the energy of today's youth, I'm inspired. Although they haven't learned all the answers to climate change yet, they haven't learned all the excuses, either.

Take David Suzuki's Nature Challenge and learn more at www.davidsuzuki.org



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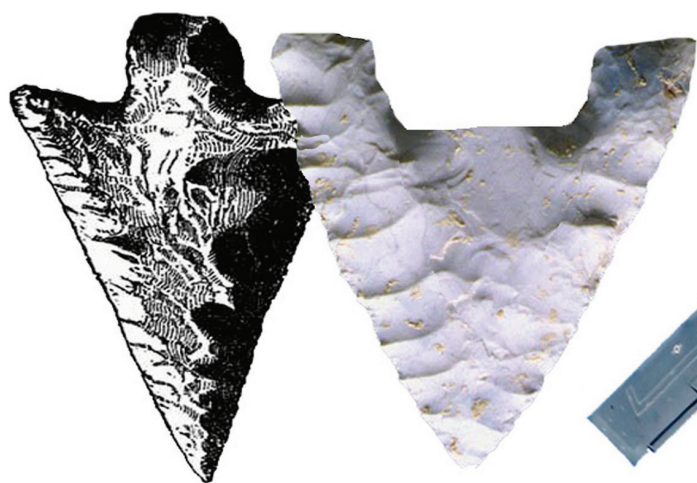
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REMEMBERING



War may come naturally to societies, but not to individuals.

by Geoff Olson

On December 24, 1914, strange things were happening in the battlefield trenches. In the region of Ypres, Belgium, German troops propped Christmas trees on their parapets and decorated them with candles. That evening, they sang out Christmas carols in German to their enemies across the muddy no-man's land. The British troops responded by singing Christmas carols in English. The camaraderie escalated and soldiers on both sides began to leave the trenches, mingling and exchanging gifts of whisky, jam, cigars, chocolate and the like. The Christmas truce spread down both trenches, according to military historian Gwynne Dyer, "at the speed of candlelight."

While accounts of this often-told tale vary, all would agree that the Germans initiated the truce. In his book, *The Small Peace in the Great War*, Michael Jurgs notes that events were kicked off a few days before Christmas when a German regiment lobbed a carefully wrapped package across the no-mans land to the British side. Inside was a chocolate cake, with a note requesting the soldiers to join in an hour-long ceasefire that evening, to celebrate their captain's birthday.

This mass outbreak of peace on the front alarmed the high command on both sides. They issued orders against fraternization, but it was days before all the men were back in the trenches, returning to the all-important business of killing each other. (In 1915, a similar Christmas truce occurred between German and French troops, and during Easter of 1916, a truce also opened up on the Eastern Front.)

We have Remembrance Day, but where on the calendar do we mark such epochal moments in wartime, when the sacrificial lambs laid down their arms and greeted one another as kindred spirits?

Boomers and their offspring have been lucky enough to live through an extended period of relative peace, following the two great wars. According to the conventional wisdom, our Canadian bacon was saved by the Cold War doctrine of MAD – "mutual assured destruction." An atomic Sword of Damocles hung over our heads, making conventional warfare a thing of the past. Of course, this is only a partial truth. While it's certainly likely that nuclear stalemate put a crimp into conscription, that didn't stop the superpowers from playing out their proxy wars across the world, from Angola to El Salvador. The Cold War put diplomatic

relations between East and West into deep freeze, but a hot war in the global south sent millions to their graves and created misery for millions more survivors. The fall of the Berlin Wall, and the collapse of communism, momentarily halted superpower brinksmanship, but not much else. The march of war continued through Kosovo, Rwanda, Darfur, Lebanon, The Congo, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Back in the seventies, I was just a naïve kid on the outskirts of Empire, whose closest acquaintance with battle was the TV series *MASH* and the BBC series *The World at War*. The sitcom was bloodless and the documentary footage grainy and discreet. The past was buried and the future looked good. The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse had been unseated and put to work shuffling papers in the Pentagon and Kremlin.

It seemed my parents' generation hadn't just defeated poverty, but conventional warfare as well. The price was paid in body counts. Factoring war-related famine and disease, there were an estimated 10 million civilian casualties in World War 1 and 47 million in World War 2. Every year on Remembrance Day, the Commonwealth nations officially commemorate the sacrifices of members of both the armed forces and of civilians in times of war. But the remembering is definitely weighted toward the warriors.

Yet in the final analysis, war isn't about remembering, but dismembering – separating people from their fami-

to slide back into a nuclear confrontation is a twist of the kaleidoscope that shifts international relations into a new pattern of rival alliances."

Does war come naturally to human beings? Let's go back thousands of years, before the emergence of civilization. Imagine a group of tribes living together peacefully, in balance with their environment and with one another. Suddenly, there is a dry spell or a collapse of the local food supply. One tribe decides to make some weapons and conquer the next tribe, turning them into slaves. The other tribe has three choices:

- 1) If they flee, the paradigm of violent tribe expands into their territory.
- 2) If they submit to slavery, the paradigm of violent tribe expands into their territory.
- 3) If they build weapons to fight back, the paradigm of the violent tribe expands into their territory.

This is the crux of Andrew Bard Schmookler's 1984 work, *The Parable of the Tribes: The Problem of Power in Social Evolution*. In Schmookler's thought experiment, diplomacy is not an option with the violent tribe, which subverts the surrounding tribes to their paradigm. He believes this is how the heavily barricaded, heavily armed city-states of the ancient Near East emerged. There is little in the archaeological record to contradict him.

We have Remembrance Day, but where on the calendar do we mark such epochal moments in wartime, when the sacrificial lambs laid down their arms and greeted one another as kindred spirits?

lies and homes, and even their life and limb. For most of history, it has smashed civilian life, paralyzed relief efforts and dehumanized its blunt instrument: the warrior class whose youthful idealism is channelled into the state narrative of heroism.

The Cold War may be over, but we're still in a hair-trigger situation, especially with the US policy of preemptive nuclear strikes against "rogue states." In his book *War*, Dyer observes, "All the major states are still organized for war and all that is needed for the world

Similarly, historian and eco-activist Derrick Jensen holds that civilization is not only inseparable from war; it *is* war. Expanding city-states required a growing influx of energy and resources from outlying areas, which put them in continual conflict with their neighbours. To defensively arm was interpreted as an aggressive posture, requiring a preventative response. Preemptive strikes predate the Bush administration by thousands of years and arms races are older than Hadrian's Wall.

The late British scientist Jacob Bronowski described war as “organized theft.” Wars don’t always begin with plunder, but they have nearly always ended with it, whether it was Carthaginian slaves, Incan gold, Nazi rocket scientists, coastal African diamonds or Iraqi oil.

War appears to be an emergent property of complex systems. Ironically, it may come naturally to societies, but not to individuals. It takes a fair amount of programming to counteract our true natures. Dyer notes that even World War 2 commanders discovered their men were often reluctant to kill in combat situations, lifting their weapons up and away from the target when they fired: “When US Army Colonel SLA Marshall finally took the trouble to inquire into what American infantrymen were actually doing on the battlefield in 1943-45, he found that, on average, only 15 percent of the trained combat riflemen fired their weapons at all in battle. The rest did not flee, but they would not kill – even when their own position was under attack and their lives were in immediate danger.”

Military psychology has spent decades determining what it takes to build the perfect warrior. The shaved heads, the drills, the sleep deprivation and the verbal abuse of basic training are meant to break down the pre-existing character and create a blank slate for military programming. Getting civilians onboard requires even more work. With the human costs of the two Great Wars recorded by scholars, recreated by Hollywood and rotated on The History Channel, it’s become more difficult for First World leaders to sell foreign campaigns to civilians. To convince them that war is either laudable or unavoidable takes all the machinery of social engineering: public relations outlets, advertising firms, media, psychological operations departments and faith-based organizations. For the aggressor nations, it’s always the same gig: the respectable convince the gullible that they’re in danger from the unspeakable.

War – what is it good for? Absolutely nothing, according to pop culture. But we have to ask, if something so deadly really works against everyone’s interests in the long term, why does it persist into modern times? Authors often use fiction to reveal unpleasant truths and no one excelled at this better than British writer George Orwell. In his novel *1984*, he freely speculated on modern warfare’s ultimate purpose:

“The primary aim of modern warfare is to use up the products of the machine without raising the general standard of living. Ever since the end of the nineteenth century, the problem of what to do with the surplus of consumption goods has been latent in industrial society. From the moment when the machine first made its appearance, it was clear to all thinking people that the need for human drudgery, and therefore to a great extent for human inequality, had disappeared. If the machine were used deliberately for that end, hunger, overwork, dirt, illiteracy and disease could be eliminated within a few generations.”

This approach is a no-win situation for the elites, Orwell claims: “For if leisure and security were enjoyed by all alike, the great mass of human beings who are normally stupefied by poverty would become literate and would learn to think for themselves; and when once they had done this, they would sooner or later realize that the privileged minority had no function, and they would sweep it away. In the long run, a hierarchical society was only possible on a basis of poverty and ignorance... The problem was how to keep the wheels of industry turning without increasing the real wealth of the world. Goods must be produced, but they must not be distributed. And in practice, the only way of achieving this was by continuous warfare.”

And here is Orwell’s slam-dunk conclusion: “The essential act of war is destruction, not necessarily of

human lives, but of the products of human labour. War is a way of shattering to pieces, or pouring into the stratosphere, or sinking in the depths of the sea, materials which might otherwise be used to make the masses too comfortable, and hence, in the long run, too intelligent.”

1984 featured three warring states: Oceania, Eurasia and Eastasia. The ever-shifting alliances and wars had one principal aim: to align the people unquestioningly under their respective leaders. The line-up of foreign villains might change, but the propaganda was essentially the same for all three states. Orwell’s nightmare vision looks scarily prescient, given the three blocs we see emerging: the “North American perimeter,” the European Union and an alliance comprised of Russia, Iran and other nations. (Even *1984*’s daily “ten minutes of hate,” directed against an ever changing line-up of villains has its modern equivalent in Fox News.)

The so-called “war on terror” is just a new riff on an age-old theme. Our leaders have declared war on an abstract noun – a vaporous enemy can never officially surrender. Perhaps this is why John McCain said last year that US forces might be in Iraq for “a hundred years.” It would also explain why Canada’s defence minister in 2006, Gordon O’Connor, observed, “It is impossible to defeat the Taliban militarily,” a line recently echoed by British Brig.-Gen. Mark Carleton-Smith, who told the *Daily Mail* that an “absolute military victory in Afghanistan is impossible.” Canada’s former Chief of the Defence Staff General Rick Hillier was even more explicit in a statement reported in the *Toronto Star* in 2006: “That’s never been the strategy – to defeat them [the Taliban] militarily.”

Orwell again: “In accordance with the principles of double-think, it does not matter if the war is not real. For when it is, victory is not possible. The war is not meant to be won, but it is meant to be continuous.”

But war isn’t solely a political problem; it’s as an existential one. Avoiding it requires more than Kissing-er-like realpolitik, and resisting it requires more than a Remembrance Day poppy. War was not buried in the ashes of Hiroshima, Dresden or Coventry, as my parents’ generation had hoped. It’s all around us. Modern consumer society feeds off ongoing, internalized battles: drug and gambling addictions, body image disorders, clinical depression, advertising-driven self-loathing and all the bad craziness of our hyper-caffeinated, overworked, overextended lifestyles.

Orwell’s “continuous warfare” has been softened and projected into our day-to-day lives, with a North American political economy engineered to break the middle class. But it doesn’t stop there. The emerging culture of constant surveillance and expanded domestic policing is starting to resemble the jackboot dystopia of Orwell’s *1984* as much as the doped-up utopia of Huxley’s *Brave New World*.

The great irony is that, in comparison to people in other parts of the world, we still lead lives of great opulence. For the diaspora of the Third World, war is no metaphor; it’s an ever-present threat. According to Médecins Sans Frontières, there are currently 43 million people across the globe displaced by war. Sixteen million of them are refugees and more than half are from only six nations/regions: 4.6 million from Palestine, 2.3 million from Iraq, 3.1 million from Afghanistan, 552,000 from Columbia, 523,000 from Sudan and 457,000 from Somalia.

In the face of capitalism’s continual crises of overproduction and the mechanical lurch toward war, there appears to be little reason for optimism – except for the fact that never before in history have so many people been linked together, with so much potential for collective awareness. And in spite of any efforts of politicians, policy wonks or police, our information technologies may have reached the stage where they cannot be fully

controlled from the top down. With increasing cynicism over traditional sources of media, much more hope is being pinned on cyberspace. For pessimists, the Internet remains little more than an infotainment “Tower of Bable,” a mad profusion of narrow interests. For optimists, it’s becoming something like a Manhattan Project of the human spirit.

As a German prisoner of war, the late author Kurt Vonnegut survived the largest massacre in European history: the firebombing of Dresden. “It was pure nonsense, pointless destruction,” he wrote in his last book, *A Man Without a Country*. “The whole city was burned down and it was a British atrocity, not ours.” At the end of his days, Vonnegut cast about for meaning for the signature event in his life and all the mass insanity he had witnessed since. “What is life all about?” he asked his sons and daughters. One son, a pediatrician, had a short, precise response. “Father, we are here to help each other get through this thing, whatever it is.”

That’s what the soldiers of the First World War were doing in the few days before Christmas of 1914, helping one another through this thing. Perhaps it was the long stretches of boredom, punctuated by moments of abject terror, which led the German side to try something unheard of. But somehow, for both sides, the



tribal circles of compassion expanded out across the enemy lines. In effect, both sides committed an act of spiritual defiance and went off-script from the parable of the tribes. British soldiers exchanged Christmas pudding and cigarettes for German cigars and cake. Both sides sang in their own languages and even improvised games of soccer in the muddy no-man’s land.

Dyer noted, “These were not professional soldiers, after all; six months before they had been farmers or bank clerks or students, and for all the naïve enthusiasms with which they had greeted the war, they had never really wanted to kill anybody, let alone to die. In its inarticulate way, it was the first peace demonstration of modern times.”

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Imagine if everyone had a baby at the same time. There wouldn't be anybody left to fight a war.

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I think being a parent is making me become more patient and compassion-

everybody but there are plenty of children to adopt or connect with. In my love drunkenness I'm still lucid enough to concede that maybe parenting for peace might not work. However the extremely strong connection that a new parent feels could be something to draw on. We lack connection in modern cultures; we're really plugged-in but rarely meaningfully joined to anything life affirming.



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ate. I've starting seeing each person as someone's precious little one. I find myself staring at strangers, wondering what their life has been like, who their parents were, and what their relationship was/is like. I was having a coffee with my friend last week and he said, "You know that feeling that you're having? Can you imagine if everyone had a baby at the same time? There wouldn't be anybody left to fight a war, they'd all be loving their new babies and excited for the other people going through the same thing."

My wife told me an interesting anecdote that my mom had told her. It was something along the lines that people who are parents are far less likely to become the perpetrator of a violent crime. I can't throw any fancy stats to verify that comment, but those who share the feelings that are coming to me these days probably agree that once you make a life it would be a lot harder to take one.

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I remember, at some point in the process, the rush I got when I committed to making a life-long choice, the very first truly all-in moment in my thirty years. The old cliché that every parent tells people, that having their child was the best thing they ever did, is true. I know that whatever may come in life I am a success and I've found a purpose greater than myself.

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Ishi graduated from Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in 2001, with a BFA. He makes films, collects cacti, and ponders many things. Currently he is doing what he can for himself, his family and the planet. contactishi@yahoo.ca

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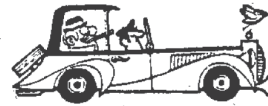
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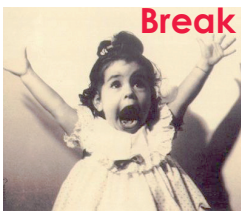
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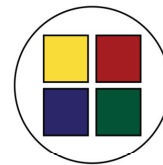
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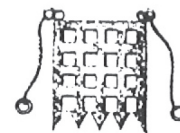
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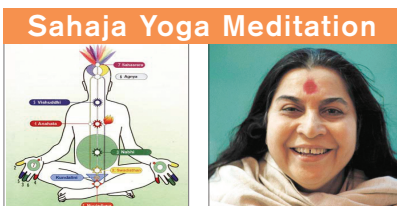
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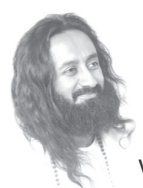
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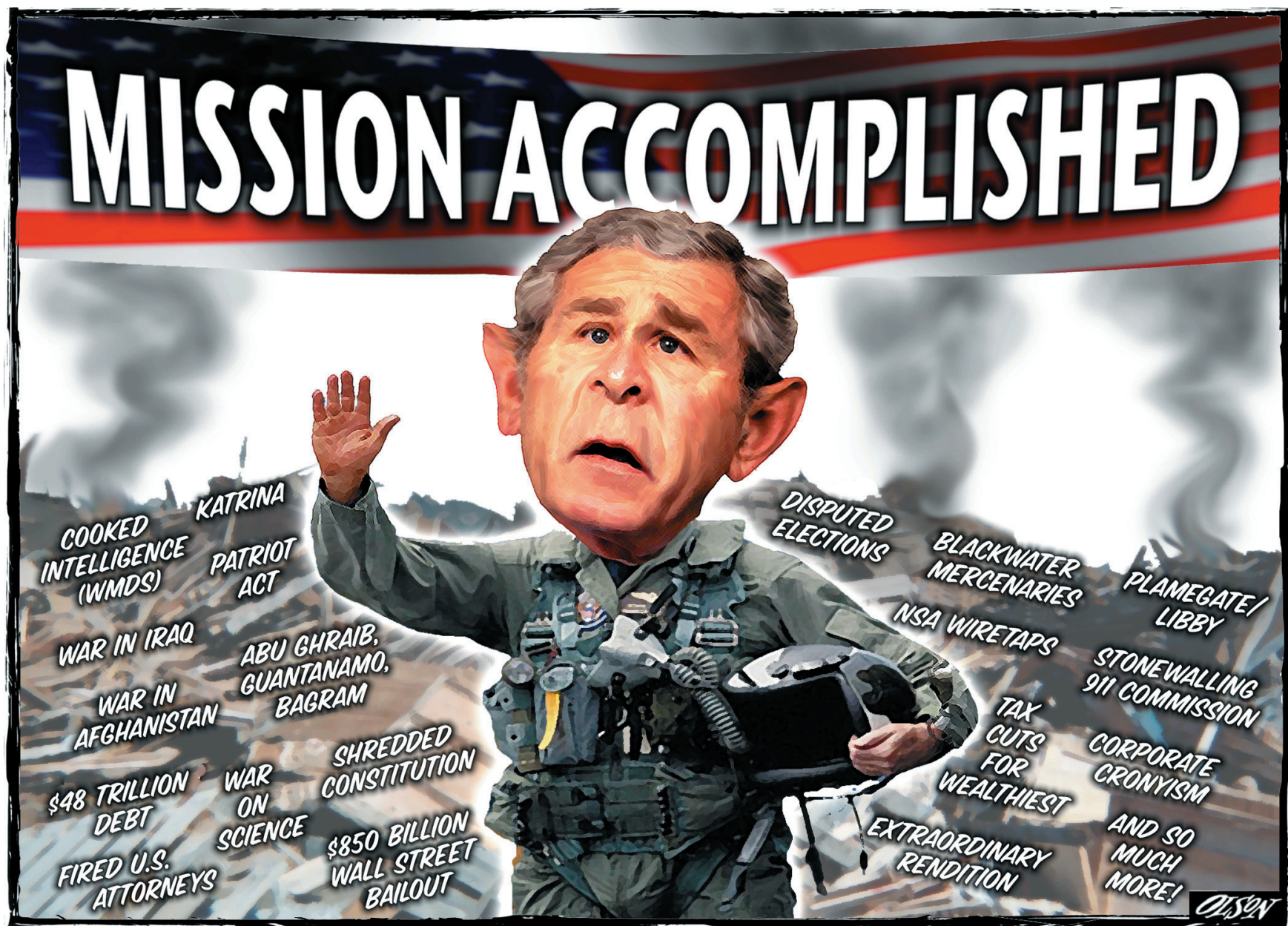
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Another US nail in the coffin of international law

On any given day US Special Operations Forces are in some sixty countries around the world.

by Robert Dreyfuss

A parallel new Bush doctrine is emerging, in the last days of the soon-to-be *ancien régime*, and it needs to be strangled in its crib. Like the original Bush doctrine – the one that Sarah Palin couldn’t name, which called for preventive military action against emerging threats – this one also casts international law aside by insisting that the United States has an inherent right to cross international borders in “hot pursuit” of anyone it doesn’t like.

They’re already applying it to Pakistan, and this week Syria was the target. Is Iran next?

Let’s take Pakistan first. Though a nominal ally, Pakistan has been the subject of at least nineteen aerial attacks by CIA-controlled drone aircraft, killing scores of Pakistanis and some Afghans in tribal areas controlled by pro-Taliban forces. *The New York Times* listed, and mapped, all nineteen such attacks in a recent piece describing Predator attacks

across the Afghan border, all since August. *The Times* notes that inside the government, the U.S. Special Operations command and other advocates are pushing for a more aggressive use of such units, including efforts to kidnap and interrogate suspected Taliban and Al Qaeda leaders. Though President Bush signed an order in July allowing U.S. commando teams to move into Pakistan itself, with or without Islamabad’s permission, such raids have occurred only once, on September 3.

The U.S. raid into Syria on October 26 similarly trampled on Syria’s sovereignty without so much as a fare-thee-well. Though the Pentagon initially denied that the raid involved helicopters and on-the-ground commando presence, that’s exactly what happened. The attack reportedly killed Badran Turki Hishan al-Mazidih, an Iraqi facilitator who smuggled foreign fighters into Iraq through Syria. *The Washington Post* was ecstatic, writing in

an editorial:

“If Sunday’s raid, which targeted a senior al-Qaeda operative, serves only to put Mr. Assad on notice that the United States, too, is no longer prepared to respect the sovereignty of a criminal regime, it will have been worthwhile.”

Is it really that easy? To say: We declare your regime criminal, and so we will attack you anytime we care to? In its news report of the attack into Syria, the *Post* suggests, in a report by Ann Scott Tyson and Ellen Knickmeyer, that the attack is raising cross-border hot pursuit to the level of a doctrine:

“The military’s argument is that you can only claim sovereignty if you enforce it,” said Anthony Cordesman, a military analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. “When you are dealing with states that do not maintain their sovereignty and become a *de facto* sanctuary, the only way you have to deal with them is this kind of operation.”

The New York Times broadens the possible targets from Pakistan and Syria to Iran, writing (in a page one story by Eric Schmitt and Thom Shanker): “Administration officials declined to say whether the emerging application of self-defense could lead to strikes against camps inside Iran that have been used to train Shiite ‘special groups’ that have fought with the American military and Iraqi security forces.”

That, of course, has been a live option, especially since the start of the surge in January, 2007, when President Bush promised to strike at Iranian supply lines in Iraq and other U.S. officials, including Vice President Cheney, pressed hard to attack sites within Iran, regardless of the consequences.

On October 24, I went to hear Mike Vickers, the assistant secretary of defense for special operations and low-intensity conflict, speaking at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP),

a pro-Israeli think tank in Washington. He spoke with pride about the vast and growing presence of these commando forces within the U.S. military, noting that their budget has doubled under the Bush administration and that, by the end of the decade, their will more than 60,000 U.S. forces in this shadowy effort. Here are some excerpts of Vickers' remarks:

"If you look at the operational core of our Special Operations Forces, and focus on the ground operators, there are some 15,000 or so of those – give or take how you count them – these range from our Army Special Forces or our Green Berets, our Rangers, our Seals, some classified units we have, and we recently added a Marine Corps Special Operations Command to this arsenal as well. In addition to adding the Marine component, each of these elements since 2006 and out to about 2012 or 2013 has been increasing their capacity as well as their capabilities, but their capacity by a third. This is the largest growth in Special Operations Force history. By the time we're done with that, there will be some things, some gaps we need to fix undoubtedly, but we will have the elements in place for what we believe is the Special Operations component of the global war on terrorism.

"There's been a very significant – about a 40 or 50 percent – increase in operational tempo, and of course more intense in terms of the action since the 9/11 attacks. On any given day that we wake up, our Special Operations Forces are in some sixty countries around the world. But more than 80 percent or so of those right now are concentrated in the greater Middle East or the United States Central Command area of responsibility – the bulk of those of course in Iraq and Afghanistan."

Notice what he said: operating in 60 countries. The very invasion of Iraq was illegal in 2003, and it flouted international law. So some may say these cross-border raids are small potatoes. But they're not. This is a big deal. If it becomes a standard part of U.S. military doctrine that any country can be declared "criminal" and thus lose its sovereignty, then there is no such thing as international law anymore.

And what of Defense Secretary Robert Gates? As quoted in the *Washington Post* article cited earlier: "Gates said that he was not an expert in international law but that he assumed the State Department had consulted such laws before the U.S. military was granted authority to make such strikes."

Not an expert in international law? He'll leave it to the State Department? And this is the guy that Barack Obama's advisers say ought to stay on at the Pentagon under an Obama administration?

Robert Dreyfuss is a contributing editor of The Nation magazine, and the author of Devil's Game: How the United States Helped Unleash Fundamentalist Islam (Metropolitan).



A scene from *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*.

Break out and break ins

FILMS WORTH WATCHING Robert Alstead

There was not a preview of the teenage rites-of-passage comedy *Growing Op* before we went to press, but the film should garner more interest than the average Canadian production which is typically in and out of the cinema before you can say "hydroponic lighting system." Writer-director Michael Melski, who hails from Sydney, Nova Scotia, drew inspiration from news stories of Vancouver grow-op raids. However, while the action takes place in a suburban grow-op, the film is not about drugs. It's about a teenage boy Quinn – home-schooled and uncertain – trying to find his way in life. Says Melski: "It's a story about Nature—about a young man growing through change, about the inexorable pull of first love, and the power of family. The long arc of the film is Quinn discovering his true nature." *Growing Op* stars Rosanna Arquette (*Pulp Fiction*), Rachel Blanchard (*Flight of the Conchords*), Wallace Langham (*Little Miss Sunshine*), and a newcomer Steven Yaffee (*MVP*). The soundtrack features many up-and-coming Canadian bands such as punk rebels Teenage Head, Matt Mays and El Torpedo, Joel Plaskett Emergency, Classified, Jill Barber, Amelia Curran, and Nathan Wiley.

Still with Canadian films, Deeptha Mehta's latest *Heaven On Earth* is out

this month, and has had mixed reviews. The film tackles the subject of arranged marriages through the story of Chand, a young woman who gives up her comfortable Indian community to move in with her socially sanctioned but abusive husband, Rocky. Deeply unhappy, Chand retreats into an inner life based on myth and fairy tales, creating a movie that some critics have called a "muddled" mixture of reality and fantasy.

Fresh from winning last month's audience award for best film at the Vancouver International Film Festival comes *I've Loved You So Long* (*Il y a longtemps que je t'aime*). A family drama of guilt and grief, it follows Juliette, a woman coming to terms with her past and present after being released from a 15 year stint in prison. The slow-burn story follows Juliette's (Kristin Scott Thomas showing excellent command of the French language) gradual rapprochement with her family after her younger sister Léa (Elsa Zylberstein) invites Juliette into her family's home.

A different kind of captivity is examined in *The Boy In The Striped Pajamas* (opening on 14th), a powerful Holocaust drama based on John Boyne's bestselling young adult novel. At its centre is Bruno, the eight-year-old son of a high ranking Nazi officer at Auschwitz who goes on boyish explorations of a near-

by "farm" where all the workers wear "striped pajamas." In his travels, Bruno befriends a bald-headed boy his age on the other side of the barbed wire fence called Shmuel. Their friendship brings about a sequence of events that leads to a moving and, not unexpectedly, tragic conclusion.

If you are looking for something lighter, *Happy Go Lucky* is an unusually optimistic, feel-good movie from British director Mike Leigh, who also gave us the excellent but bleak *Secrets & Lies* and *Vera Drake*. *Happy Go Lucky* was developed using improvisational techniques of Leigh's previous work, with its emphasis on deep characters. The film revolves around Poppy (Sally Hawkins) a chirpy, elementary school teacher in London, England who takes up driving lessons after someone steals her bicycle. When Sally finds herself stuck behind the wheel with a socially awkward instructor, the polar opposite of herself, it is an opportunity for her to shine. The film does depend on you being won over by Polly, but for most people that won't be a problem. Oscar nominations are already being talked about for Hawkins.

Robert Alstead maintains a blog at www.2020Vancouver.com

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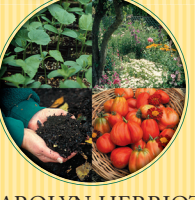
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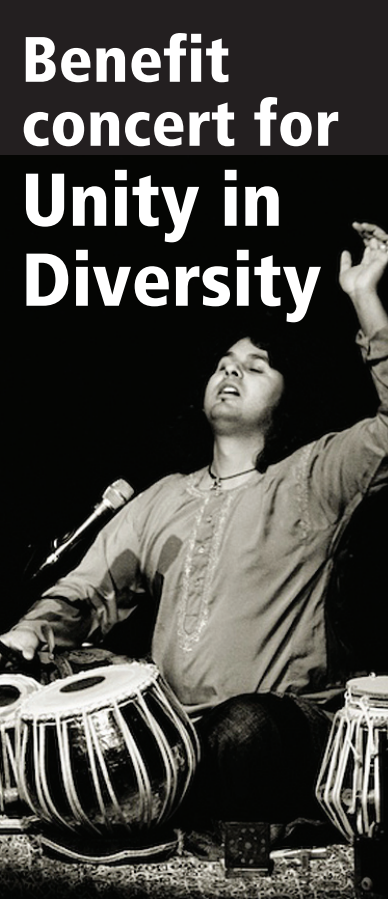


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Benefit concert for Unity in Diversity

Cassius Khan

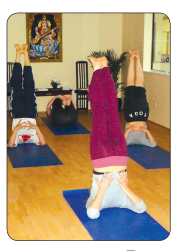
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NOV 6 - 9

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tickets and full schedule: www.vaff.org

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www.shamanichealing.info

NOV 8

Benefit Concert for Unity in Diversity.
Cassius Khan joins Amika Kushwaha and Ustad Majid Qiyam in a world class classical Indian music performance at the Maple Ridge Arts Centre and Theatre (ACT). 8pm. 11944 Haney Place, Maple Ridge. www.unityindiversity.ca

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NOV 7, 8, 9

Radiant Mind: Awakening Unconditioned Awareness: with author Peter Fenner. Weekend Workshop, Masonic Hall. Free Talk. Booksigning Friday 6:30pm, sponsored by Banyen Books. Information: lynda@lyndacole.org, 604-926-6680.

NOV 12 & NOV 27

Benjamin Creme, author and esotericist talks about the emergence of Maitreya, the World Teacher. Video presentation 7 pm, YWCA Hotel, 733 Beatty, CANFOR Room. Free event sponsored by Tara Canada. Donations gratefully accepted.

NOV 13 - 16

Poetry Gabriola Festival - 5th Annual poetry, spoken word, storytelling, workshops & music information & tickets: www.poetrygabriola.com

NOV 16

Adam Dreamhealer: Intention Heals Workshop in Vancouver. Experience Self-Empowerment as Adam orchestrates 2 group healings, introduces his new book, Intention Heals and teaches techniques

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All registration: www.dreamhealer.com

NOV 17 & 18

Kindness Sings - 8th Annual World Kindness Concert, November 17 and 18, 2008
Time: 7:30pm, Unity Theatre
5840 Oak Street, Vancouver

NOV. 26 & DEC. 17

DVT Peer Support Group. For those with Deep Vein Thrombosis including Pulmonary Embolism. 6:30-8:30 p.m. Burnaby Library--McGill. Registration and info: Brenda 604-309-0610.

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Spiritual Centre for Dynamic Living. If you enjoy Oprah's Soul Series with leading spiritual teachers, you'll feel at home in our community. Sundays 11AM - Vancouver Planetarium, 1100 Chestnut St. www.dynamiccentre.com

SOS (Science of Spirituality): See Resource Directory listing in Spiritual Practices for schedule in Richmond, Vancouver & Victoria. 604-277-1247. All Welcome. www.sos.org

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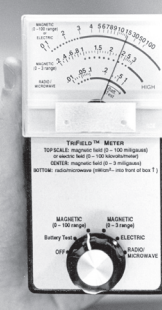
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On Track Zodiac

NOVEMBER 2008 Adrien Dillon



ARIES (Mar 21 – Apr 19)

As so much of the water influence now pervades the planets, these are not fiery times. You could use this time to create and plan in secrecy, striking when the iron is hot, mid-month. Write things down and get clear so you can sharpen your skills before engaging in action.



TAURUS (Apr 20 – May 21)

Any friction you might feel could spur you on to great things. Use this time to benefit from any so-called mistakes and learn what needs to be learned. Some of you may feel more thrilled about life, rather than challenged. It all makes for a great, rousing time.



GEMINI (May 22 – Jun 20)

There is a possibility that a “move” is in the cards – to be the “traveller,” coupled with a desire to get out and experience different situations. You may wish to get in touch with ways to harness your potential and eliminate anything that impedes your ability to make your mark.



CANCER (Jun 21 – Jul 22)

The rebuilding of your home and its foundation might be your focus now. The strengthening of anything that has insecurity stamped upon it has your attention. This is a time to check all the plumbing, pipes and storage spaces. The repair and restoration of your body as your temple is also required.



LEO (Jul 23 – Aug 22)

You will need to be well prepared and very conscious of your motivations and actions. You could have ego conflicts with others all across the boardroom. Communications must be well thought-out or others may find flaws and stomp all over your well-intentioned plans and ideas. Keep shining.



VIRGO (Aug 23 – Sep 22)

Although you are an adult, do you sometimes go to bed feeling like you are six-years-old again? Perhaps some very issues have surfaced and some inner child healing is required. Still waters run deep and the coming years will reveal more of your depth of character and prowess.



LIBRA (Sep 23 – Oct 22)

It's good vibrations and excitations, just like in the Beach Boys' song. You are feeling from the point of view of peace and freedom. It is likely that love is flowing with an unbridled thirst and an appreciation for life is running through your heavenly days.



SCORPIO (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

A predominance of planets aligns in Scorpio for most of the month, opening the floodgates for creativity. You feel right in your element and able to ignite and follow through on projects, new and old. You have only hit the tip of the iceberg of excitement and possibility.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22 – Dec 21)

You may find that your mind is racing while you intuitively know that you should not run headlong into something. Take your precious time now to make good, solid choices. If you need to wait, perhaps even being perceived as stubborn, stay your course.



CAPRICORN (Dec 22 – Jan 19)

You seem to revel in the toasting of liberation and freedom. This is a perfect time for visualizing, as you plant seeds symbolically. Prepare to “get down to brass tacks” in the coming months. Take your vision and run with it.



AQUARIUS (Jan 20 – Feb 19)

Jubilant times set the tone, however, if you cross paths with those who consider you self-centred or a threat, you might find yourself in adverse circumstances. The best thing for you to do is to become a better listener, while proceeding with clarity and self-fulfillment.



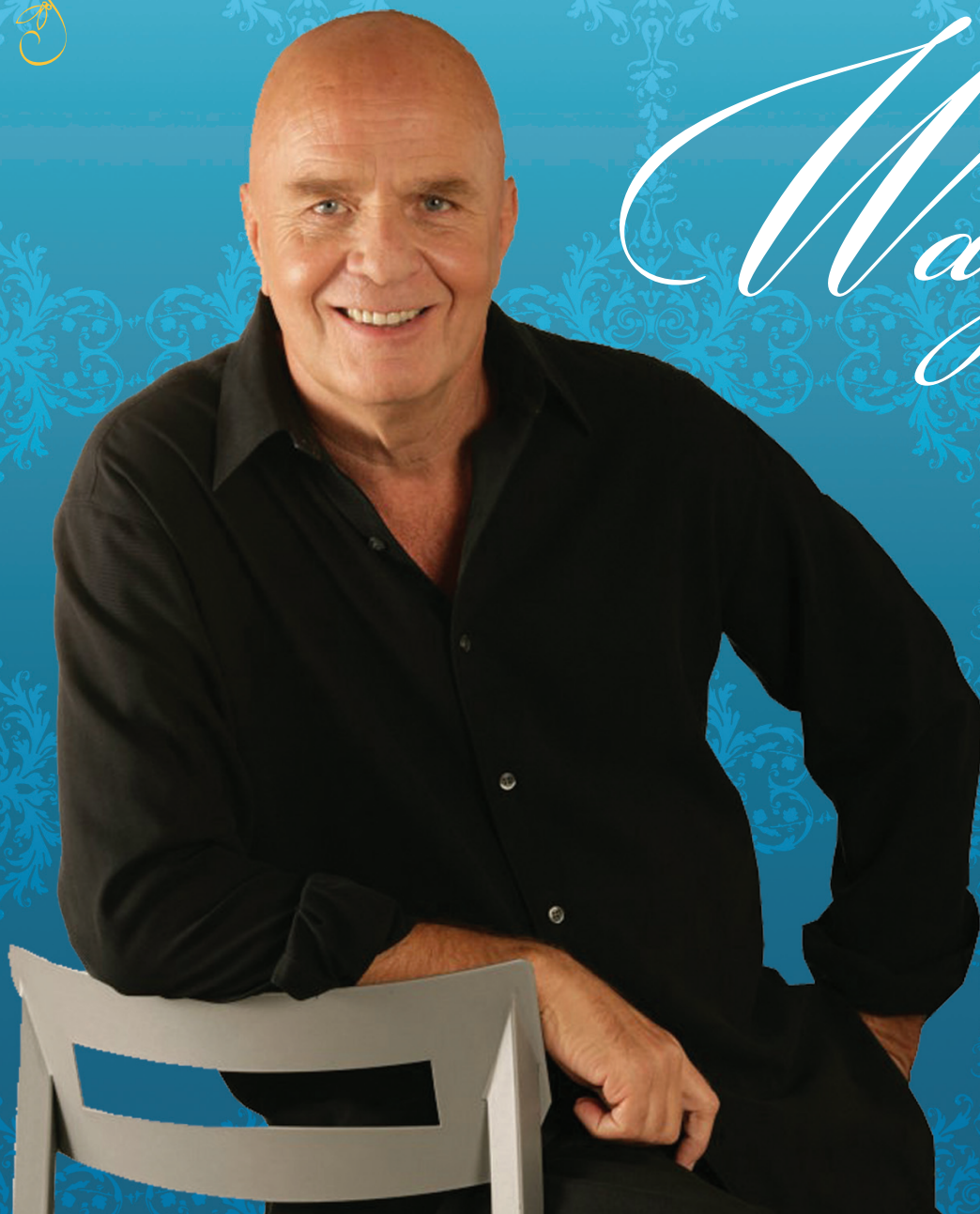
PISCES (Feb 20 – Mar 20)

You may see a stop sign as you set out on one of your usual spending sprees. Choose, perhaps, to spend less on your usual splurges and manage your savings instead. See how much farther your dollars can go and feel the thrill of the “payoff” for your behaviour.

Adrien Dillon is a clairvoyant consultant and author with 33 years of experience in astrology, multi-media art and healing, adrien.dillon@gmail.com.

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